

OLD PICTURES
HOW TO COLLECT THEM

A. ERNEST HARLEY

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BY

A. ERNEST HARLEY

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PREFACE.

THIS book is intended to be of some assistance to those people who are making a collection of old pictures, to those who deal in such, and to all who have any interest in them, by giving a few suggestions gathered by practical experience, whereby they may be assisted in recognising what is a genuine and what is a copied picture.

The author acknowledges the kindness of those gentlemen who have allowed their pictures to be reproduced, and who gave every facility to Messrs. Annan to prepare the plates.

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The Art Critic and Collecting.

Notwithstanding that we live in days of greatly increased art knowledge compared with the early period of the Victorian era, it may be safely asserted that the majority of people are indebted to the verbal or written opinions of professed critics for whatever ideas they possess of art.

Occasionally one will hear the remark, "An artist friend of mine told me," etc., spoken in such a way that, if the artist is of any note, it appears to settle a dispute or argument, and the decision is accepted as incontrovertible. Now, while granting that an artist may be thoroughly conversant with his own particular branch, and even that by example he may be a most capable teacher of painting, it is nevertheless true that there are few painters whose power of unbiased criticism in any degree equals their skill of production in the region of practical art work, and, in fact, the opinion of the ordinary professional artist is generally more narrow-minded than that of any other person. But

when a painter has the gift of true criticism, and can entirely put away his pet prejudices for a particular school or schools, his knowledge should be, of course, immeasurably superior to that of the critic who cannot paint, and he almost invariably detects some practical truth the layman is apt to overlook. The reason why there are so few painter-critics is simply because few realise the necessity of putting aside this tendency to predilection for a particular school when discussing art matters.

In an art colony one notices at once that "shop" is usually the talk everywhere and at all times, and the student, often unconscious of the fact, is learning more by the interchange of ideas and by argument than if the time so occupied were given to actual work. The ordinary critic, on the other hand, is very seldom in the position of being able to gain this advantage, and has to learn when and where he can. In short, the painter talks that he may learn, whereas the critic learns that he may talk.

It is difficult to say which has the larger field wherein to fulfil his mission of teaching; they both do an immense amount of good, the one by putting the beautiful before the eyes of the world, the other by teaching the world how to see it. For it may

be accepted as a truism, that for every hundred of the outside public who have the good fortune to see a great picture, a thousand will read with interest a criticism of it in their daily paper, though they may have no hope of ever seeing the picture themselves, and it is surprising how few people seem able to discover unaided the special merits or particular faults of pictures at an exhibition, and how many there are who, if they had not read their daily paper before visiting the exhibition, would have passed many of the best works without noticing their distinctive features and excellencies. A good critic is the painter's greatest helper, for he teaches what to admire and why, whereas an incapable one does much harm, both by stinting praise where it is due and by flattering where it is not.

To acquire the knowledge necessary to qualify a man as a critic requires many years' hard study, and not only is it to his advantage to have some practical ability himself, that is, to be able to paint, but it is essential that he has the critical instinct born in him. Few people possess this faculty of open-minded criticism, and many rely chiefly on their ability to invest with an air of authority their own opinions, founded too often on a superficial and

imperfect knowledge of whatever branch of art they may be dealing with. There is a very great difference between the man who is merely able to estimate the market value of pictures, which only needs the experience of a dealer in a large way of business, and the trained man who can appreciate the good qualities of work.

Beware of the dealer who knows everything about art, who can tell who painted anything, and who seems like a walking art dictionary. The man who really knows has confined his studies to one man or one group of men, and though he may or may not know much about other painters, he can be depended on for his opinion in his specialty.

The intelligent formation of a collection of pictures cultivates the taste in many other directions, because good judgment in art matters assists good judgment in many other things. Some people are deterred from buying a picture by the fact that they do not know enough about art to rely on their own opinion; there are many, nevertheless, who have such a natural taste for what is good that, with a little help, they quickly make progress in the right direction, and soon become able to form a good collection. The pleasure one has in possessing a good example is much increased if one has pur-

chased it trusting to his own discrimination, and without the advice of a dealer, who is not always disinterested. There are more frauds perpetrated in picture dealing than in horse dealing, and this book is written with a view to helping the reader to recognise good work and to protect him from buying an old master—manufactured last week.

There is a prevalent belief that an old picture of value but seldom enters the market, and that when it does it is invariably noticed and fetches a big price; this is erroneous, as the few who know good work at a glance are not everywhere, and valuable pictures frequently escape their attention. Pictures are constantly changing hands and people continually buying and selling, and works are accordingly being dispersed throughout the country; the purchasers, for one reason and another, are forced or wishful to sell, and so the ball rolls on. Many of the world's greatest examples have changed hands dozens of times, and often have even got lost in the process. It was possible within the last fifteen years to pick up in this country genuine examples of Italian and Dutch painters for a few shillings. The trade with the low countries to and from Scotland and the north of England was at one time considerable, and both pictures and

furniture were often brought across. Many a well-known picture has at some stage of its history been sold for a few shillings, and though it is absurd to think the works of great painters can be purchased for small sums at almost any curio shop and auction room, it is a fact that the collector who has knowledge may occasionally find a work of great value. Of late years there are more people on the lookout for wandering treasures, and admittedly they are not easy to come across, but still they turn up more often than most people are aware of.

A seemingly good example, on close inspection, is often found to have passed through some incapable cleaner's hands, to be touched up and irretrievably ruined, and these defects hidden with a thick coat of varnish, as more good works have been spoiled by inefficient cleaners than by time and accident. As a rule cleaning an old picture makes a marvellous improvement and is well worth doing, but any one with a valuable example who desires it cleaned, should first ascertain most carefully from a reliable source into whose hands he ought to place it, as ninety-nine out of a hundred restorers do irreparable damage.

A proper cleaner and retoucher is a highly-trained man who earns his living by restoring and that

alone, whereas the generality of cleaners, so-called, are frame makers, or men who do other work, and do not devote all their time and energies to restoration, and who have not the practical knowledge and gifts of a painter, which are absolutely necessary.

The most frequent damage is caused by over-cleaning as, except in rare instances, it is inadvisable to take off all the varnish from an old picture—to “clean to the bone.” Mellow varnish, clean and transparent, is very beautiful on an old canvas, and it is as great vandalism to tear it off as to take the varnish off an old violin and daub it over with housepainters’ varnish. Sometimes, in fact usually, not only the varnish is taken off but all the delicate parts of a painting with it, necessitating retouching; and in the case of, say, a Vandyck portrait, it is no longer a portrait by the original artist but a combined work by Vandyck and Smith or Brown.

Again, the inexperienced or incompetent man does not use the right pigments, but works away with the ordinary oil colours, the result being that when the painting is varnished and the oil dries the colour loses brilliancy and changes completely, usually becoming a darker shade than its surroundings. A repair should be stippled with a fine

pointed brush, and should be so exactly matched that to touch the part under repair and it alone is all that is necessary.

It will be seen, therefore, that such work demands a craftsman with considerable talent, as, apart from being painstaking he must have a good sense of colour and be able to match colours. A man without these gifts is forced to paint all round the part he is mending in order to hide the place, and though his work may seem satisfactory for a month or two, in about two years, often less, all his re-touching can be seen, having the appearance of dirty opaque blemishes on the canvas.

We recently saw a portrait of a lady by Sir Peter Lely; the sitter was in a sky blue silk dress which, with the background, had obviously been repainted. On the new paint being removed a beautiful old gold and dark blue costume was revealed, while a luxuriant head of hair was covered by the new background. All this had been perpetrated because of two holes, each the size of a shilling, one of which was in the breast and one in the background.

Retouching may be of recent date and not have had time to discolour, so a careful examination is always advisable before purchasing a picture. If it is much touched up or has been over-rubbed it is



advisable to leave it alone, as this sort of picture one soon tires of, even if much of the good qualities remain, and when it comes to be resold it is invariably a loss. On the other hand if you come across a really good old picture in good condition buy it, no matter of what school it is. They are becoming scarcer every year, many going to America, and the majority, even very valuable works sometimes, are being rubbed and cleaned away by restorers.

Do not be influenced too much by any school or schools, but train yourself to be broad minded as to different styles of art. Make yourself able to appreciate the beauties of a Gerard Dow as well as the beauties of a Frans Hals, the one a dainty painter, the other a forceful painter.

There are forgeries in art as in everything else which is worth collecting and which has a market value. A collector recently brought from the continent several pictures for which he had paid a considerable sum of money, which on examination were all "faked." They purported to be old masters. The canvases were woven like old canvases, and the paint was of a dry quality, the frames cracked and worm-eaten, and as the period they purported to be of was before the days of rings, wrought iron fastenings were affixed to the back ;

these were rusted and worn presumably with age, but on scratching the surface, bright new metal appeared, and on cutting a piece from the frame the wood was still green. The whole fraud was so carefully and ingeniously contrived, and the actual painting so good that it was quite excusable for any one not highly trained to have been so taken in were it not for the fact that there was no luminosity in the pigments. This kind of "fake" has generally a peculiar dead appearance, almost as if the canvas had been rubbed with dust, caused by the lack of transparency and luminosity in the pigments. The continent has been visited for several generations by travellers who are connoisseurs and bargains are more scarce there than here, and it will generally be found more profitable to buy in this country, where the demand has not, as yet, created a sufficient supply.

Fear of such an experience as this is what prevents many, who can well afford the luxury, from purchasing old pictures and having the pleasure of a collection of their own. This fear is very much exaggerated, notwithstanding the fact that the picture market is flooded with copies. Although it is impossible to acquire a great knowledge of art either by books or with a few years'

study, a love and appreciation can be formed if the wish is there, and it is within the power of most people, who are disposed to give the matter some little study, to be able in many cases to tell a copy from an original, in cases where well-known painters are concerned. The thing to study first and most is the handling.

A knowledge of good brushwork is of great assistance in distinguishing an original from a copied picture, as to the trained eye it is as easy to identify a man's brushwork as it is an acquaintance's handwriting. The difficulty arises in the case of old copies, where the copyist has been as capable as the original painter, as far as the brushwork at any rate is concerned. Imitated brushwork can usually be detected, but when a good draughtsman copies a picture with his own facile handling of the brush, he sometimes paints better than the picture he copies ; but the best copyist cannot help betraying his own style of handling, and if one is able to identify the handling of the painter to whom the picture is ascribed, any doubt should easily be ended.

Suppose we take a picture said to be by Hals, one of the easiest masters to identify, owing to his mastery of the brush. Is it Frans Hals' handling,

or is it not? Well, if works by this painter are known to the would-be collector, and if he has studied the brushwork, it should be comparatively easy. Of necessity, if the painter's work is unknown, it is not possible to tell, but there is a good example or two of most great artists' work in London and other large cities from which to study. Study the weight of the touch, the thickness of paint and the method of stroke—in short, study how it is done. If you can tell how a good picture is achieved your appreciation of it will be greatly enhanced; although the style of handling ought not to strike the observer too apparently. This is the method to begin with, but do not try to recognise too many kinds of technique at first. Take two or three painters and learn their handling thoroughly, and although you will only know the work of men you study, that knowledge will help immensely in detecting copied pictures of the work of men you have not studied. There is no great picture but what is "handled" in a great manner.

One of the most successful ways of "faking" pictures is to get an old canvas that has at one time had a good bit of work on it, but which has somehow been spoiled and become worthless, and to clean it up and repaint it, making the old paint of

good quality do service wherever it possibly can, and then perhaps reline it and tone it down with varnish with some brown stain in it. The only way to detect this sort of fraud is to be able to tell old paint from new, and it is well to be able to distinguish all sorts of retouching as well as repainting.

The majority of "faked" pictures come from abroad, where in certain places there are factories expressly for their manufacture, and there is little need of caution with a "home made" fraud, as it is not generally sufficiently clever to deceive anybody. There is no need to be discouraged because of being imposed on at the outset. The best-known collectors are sometimes at fault, and get hoodwinked sooner or later, and there is always a possibility of some day coming across a really valuable picture.* As well as "Old Masters," there are still portraits by Romney, Reynolds, Raeburn and others occasionally to be found in the most unexpected quarters, the only unfortunate point being that it is generally some one else who has the luck to find them; but it may happen at any time to anyone. Many a good picture has been lost to the intending purchaser by his taking too long to make up his mind to buy it, and not having

sufficient confidence in his judgment to recognise good work at once when he sees it. However, there are people who expect to obtain pictures of this sort for too small a sum, only to find the owner unwilling to sell, as in these days, when everyone has some knowledge of art, the dealer who has a good picture usually has a fancy for it, and, though he may not know who painted it, does not intend to let it go for a trifle. This is the chance for the collector with knowledge, who ungrudgingly will give his fifty pounds if he knows what he is buying, whereas to the man without the necessary knowledge fifty pounds seems a large sum even though he likes the picture. In art collecting, as in business, it is the bold buyer who most often achieves success. But the collector who is only commencing should never buy without advice he can trust, as the ease with which money will disappear will astonish him, and when he finds, as knowledge grows, that his collection is better without many of his early purchases, he will realise that it is easier to buy than to sell.

It is very essential to be able to recognise the quality of paint, much in the same way as collectors of china regard the quality of paste—as to its smoothness or hardness, its wetness or dryness ; and this is

simply a matter of practice by comparison, and is moderately easy to learn, and when learned assists the collector of pictures in detecting where and how much a picture is retouched. A picture is not necessarily much damaged if retouched, if it has been properly done, and if there has been only reasonably small cause for it. If the pictures in any public gallery are examined for retouching it will be seen that a very large number have been through a restorer's hands, and, even in the case of famous paintings the retouching has sometimes been done very badly. Of course this may have occurred before the pictures were purchased by, or bequeathed to, the gallery, but the fact remains that the various public galleries are the best places for the study of retouching. Many a picture has failed to find a purchaser because of unnecessary repainting, and often when a whole sky, which was repainted, has been removed the original sky has been found beneath, preserved under a coat of varnish which some "restorer" has been afraid or too negligent to remove, and has found it easier to daub in a sky of his own, which in a few years, owing to inferior pigments, has become out of tone.

No opportunity should be lost of seeing and examining an important picture, no matter who the

painter is, or of what period, as, if the work is sound, the memory of some of its good qualities will always remain in the mind, and will probably help to identify the work of the same painter at a future date.

There are many superficial little things quite easily learned which, if they are looked for when buying, will aid considerably in detecting frauds, and to apply common sense is a habit to be cultivated, especially on those occasions when a person is offered such subjects, painted from life, as "Napoleon assisting Christopher Columbus to embark for America," by Vandyke, or "Mary Queen of Scots," by Raeburn.

If a picture is being offered as an original work, take a casual glance to see if the work has any characteristic of the painter whose work it purports to be, then turn it right round and examine the back. If it has been relined and put on a new stretcher, you will not find so much, but let us suppose this has not been done. Take as an instance an old Dutch picture—with a little practice it is possible to distinguish if the stretcher is Dutch, if the canvas is Dutch, and if they are not, and on examining the paint of the picture itself, both as to colour and consistency, if it is not Dutch either, it stands to reason something is

wrong. Nevertheless, do not hastily reject it—it may be something not so good or something better than it is being sold for, and, after all, if it is really a good picture it does not much matter who painted it. Likewise, if the picture is supposed to be painted by an old master and the canvas, paint, &c. seem old, it is necessary to remember that many very old copies exist, often painted by as good artists as the originals were, but still it is useful to be able to detect if the materials are of the age claimed for them. Then as to copies—some of the greatest experts on earth have been misled by copies, and there are several in the various large public galleries for which huge sums have been paid under the belief they were originals.

In painting a portrait most great artists endeavour to give to the hands a suggestion of the individuality of the sitter, and it is a remarkable fact that a painter's own characteristics are more easily discerned in his treatment of hands and feet than in any other part.

It is extremely interesting to compare the treatment of hands by great painters, as to whether they are large or small (in judging of this, compare in relation to the face), slender and graceful, or short

and broad, whether the fingers are set wide apart at the junction with the palms, if the fingers taper or end abruptly, and as to their length compared with each other. In fact this is one of the most important things to be considered in determining the authenticity of a painting.

No leaves of a plant harmonise in contour with its flower like its own leaves, and, likewise, the treatment of hands should harmonise with the treatment of the face. Imagine a rose growing on the same stem with geranium leaves, or a lady's face by Vandyck associated with hands by Rembrandt—both beautiful flowers, both great artists, but it does not do to mix them up. Speaking of Vandyck, he, like several great portrait painters, frequently made much use of the action of hands, and in a number of his portraits of ladies he has the hands in the act of opening a fan or twining a ribbon round the fingers.

There is no more beautiful type of hand than that in the pictures and sculpture of Michael Angelo. Both in the hands and feet the drawing of the nails is slightly concave at the sides, while the tips are slightly flattened. It is sometimes said, even by those who concede that they are beautiful, that they are not human, yet such hands can be seen,

very seldom no doubt, but still there are many living hands and feet of the Michael Angelo type.

Many other examples of artists' individuality in the treatment of hands could be given, but enough has been said to show how, with study, the authenticity of a work can often be traced in this way, and to indicate how useful a knowledge of this detail will be. Bad drawing and eccentricities are to be found in many famous pictures, but there is always some good work in the hands. It takes a trained draughtsman to draw them, and there is nothing in nature more difficult to depict, especially the hand or foot of a young child, say about eighteen months old. It is no exaggeration to say that the painter who is able to draw and paint correctly the subtleties of line and colour in a baby's hand and foot is able to paint anything. There are, of course, cases where in portraiture the hands are so low down in the picture that they become an unimportant part of the composition, and are treated in a free unfinished manner, in fact merely suggested, but however carelessly drawn, they invariably have some good quality if done by a great painter.

The human character is shown in the hands as much as in the face, the working man having a worker's hand and the scholarly man a scholarly

hand, and in painting them the difficulty is to get their character without making too much of them and so detracting from the face. Head size portraits are sometimes spoiled either through the awkward posing of the hands or owing to them being out of tone and catching the eye too prominently, causing it to be attracted down to what should be subservient in interest to the face.

The most beautiful hand is not the small hand, but the shapely hand ; a hand may be too small as well as too big. The hand of an intelligent person has always great character in the thumb ; the strong mind is essentially the active mind, and the active mind shows itself in the hand. There are people who refrain from using their hands much for fear they get too large, but it is preferable to have hands large and shapely than either large or small and shapeless, and the human body is meant to be exercised in a rational way, as can be seen in the athlete, who has a finer form and more grace than the loafer, the development caused by exercise being nature's own arrangement. As a class professional pianists have well-shaped hands, not abnormally developed in size, either in the fingers or at the back, and yet most of them are exercising their digits several hours a day.



How few modern full-length portraits have any attention paid to the feet! As a rule the sitter is painted in boots which look more like armour than blackened leather, and the boots or shoes are often very badly drawn. It is impossible to give a figure the appearance of standing on the floor if it is in cast-iron boots of extraordinary shape.

The intelligent collecting of pictures teaches a man to be observant and to be sympathetic, and to see loveliness where, previously, he was unaware it dwelt, not only in the fields and forest, but in the character of those fellow-men he meets with.

It is a mistake to collect all kinds of pictures for a private house, as it is difficult to compare their qualities and to keep the whole collection up to the standard of the best. Enough variety can be found in a collection of Dutch panels to please anybody.

Another interesting hobby is the collecting of old portraits of good quality, and if the connoisseur cannot afford "Romneys" and "Raeburns" there are innumerable other painters of a high order of merit more easily procurable. Any one with a spacious dining-room cannot do better with the walls from a decorative point of view than to hang good old portraits right round it, and have no other pictures

in the room. They give an air of distinction to the room that landscapes cannot give, and if a collection is restricted to portraiture alone there is a possibility of the owner acquiring a discriminating taste in what is the most lucrative branch of art, both to the painter and the dealer, and, though a collector may not be wishful to sell, it is pardonable to have pride in possessing pictures of a quality which is not seen in every house.

There is a large number of portraits, both by British and Dutch painters, which can still be procured at a reasonable price, of good quality and admirable colour. Apart from artistic and decorative qualities, if they are of eminent or well-known personages of any age they have a romantic interest. While speaking of portraits it may be pointed out that the great majority of people hang them badly. If a portrait is very bad put it in the lumber room, but if it is worth hanging it should not be placed so high that its qualities cannot be seen ; the proper height is one which brings the face of the sitter between six and seven feet from the ground. A room in a private house ought not to have the walls covered like a public gallery, but should be sparsely hung, if possible, with fairly large canvases. If numbers of little pictures are stuck all over the walls it not only

spoils the effect of the pictures but also the general effect of the room. The walls of a room where pictures are placed should have no pattern on it, and a dull red, brown or green is best. Care should be taken not to have the colour too pronounced, as the colours which seem to most people more or less dingy when seen as a small sample look best when on the wall.

The principal danger to the collector is that he may become, unless he keeps a guard on himself, too mercenary, and that the beauties of art and nature may be in part obscured by the knowledge of market value and the desire to make a large profit.

The unobservant person misses a great deal of pleasure in life, and it is only the self-trained eye that can appreciate the morning song of Corot or the vesper hymn of Millet.

Light and Colour.

In painting a picture four things are absolutely essential to success, correct drawing, beautiful colour, good handling, and true light and shade, and any one wishing to have a true appreciation of art matters, and to be able to form an opinion of his own, would do well to take up these four subjects separately, to choose from the Old Masters four who each excelled in one of these branches, and to study them. Opinions, of course, may vary as to who was greater than others, but if Michael Angelo is followed for drawing, Titian for colour, Frans Hals for handling, and Rembrandt for light and shade, one will not go far wrong.

It is generally conceded that the artist who had all these qualities most at his command was Velasquez ; he probably was the greatest portrait painter who ever lived. But a great deal of enthusiastic nonsense is talked about this master, as it is impossible to know his work without going to Madrid, and most of those who profess admiration for his

work are merely talking from hearsay, and in many cases have not even been out of their own country. To appreciate properly the work of the Old Masters requires particular study, which the majority of people do not give to the subject, but talk about this or that particular artist without knowing much about his work, and of all people who talk nonsense the most tiresome is the one who talks art nonsense, either by the appreciation of what he has no means of studying, or by the appreciation of that which is not worth study. If some who loudly voice their opinions in public galleries only realised this, what a difference it would make on Opening Days!

The beautiful colour of old pictures is not entirely due to the mellowness of age or varnish, as some think, but largely to a better chosen palette and to better pigments. The colour especially of some old Italian and Dutch pictures is so good that even placed upside down they hold their own with much modern art, if only by their decorative scheme of colour.

Good brushwork is the power of being able to depict a particular object with free strokes of the brush, and at the same time to represent the surface quality of that object; to give the observer the

feeling that he is looking at flesh, or cloth, or silk without "labouring" the paint. This is the quality which makes a painting look crisp and fresh.

In regarding the general effect of a portrait, one of the first things to look for is the direction of light, on which depends the scheme of light and shade. Reynolds argued that he always found a preponderance of darks to lights in a great portrait, in a ratio of about eight to one, but, as in all matters pertaining to art, there is no hard and fast rule, otherwise those portraits painted in a full even light would not be held in the first class. It is obvious if a strong ray of light is thrown from the left top to the face that the lower right parts of the features will be in shadow. This is a simple enough thing, yet is often paid little attention to, as was the case with the artist who started one summer morning to paint a field of hay-ricks, finishing it the same day, and not paying any attention to light, he did not notice the sun had gone round, and painted two shadows for each rick.

On the truthful lighting of a landscape depends its success as to the time of day and kind of day which it is meant to represent, whether it is morning, midday, or evening, or sunny or dull. Of course the ordinary landscape is devoid of any such

intention and represents none of these times and conditions, or, maybe, the whole of them together.

A shadow is never opaque, and good colour is as necessary in low tones as in high, as is markedly expressed in Rembrandt's work, the greatest master of tone, whose painting of shadows is invariably beautiful and translucent. An appreciation of colour can be acquired with study, but most people do not understand colour, because they are too careless to look for it. How few know anything about a beautiful black; and after all, what is black? There is no such thing in nature; broadly speaking, it is simply a dark brown or blue. The same thing applies to white. All whites are coloured, and in paint good or bad white can only be judged in relation to its surroundings. If a pocket-handkerchief is placed on a newspaper, though both are white a great difference will be seen. The value of a good white is at once apparent in the draperies in any good portrait where white is prominent.

The eye naturally pays most attention to what it sees most easily—that is neither too bright a light nor too dense a shade, and to understand either extreme it is necessary to be observant and to be continually comparing things.

"Who ever saw a sky like that?" may be heard in a gallery about some masterly sky, which has been painted after careful study and examination of the effect. Years after, maybe, the speaker will see something in nature precisely the same, and then realizes he had looked at it scores of times before, but had not seen it till now. Even the sunsets of Turner seem to be overdone to many people, and yet the subject is frequently so gorgeous in this country that paint can but feebly suggest its splendour.

The beautiful colour of Correggio's flesh painting with its translucent glow is supposed to have been achieved by the aid of some wax or varnish which is not now known. It was the custom of the old painters, especially the Dutch, to mix certain vehicles with their paint, to get a rich quality which cannot be otherwise got, these vehicles having much the same luminous effect as bitumen without its evil results of cracking, and certainly the more modern painter experiments too little and rarely knows anything at all of the chemistry of his pigments, being content to buy his material ready made and mixed, using and knowing of no vehicles but varnish, linseed oil and turpentine. The Old Masters were craftsmen in the best sense of the word.

They understood the building up of a picture and worked from the start with an ultimate end, every particular state of a picture being utilised as a foundation for a subsequent state. Great care was taken with the priming and preparing of the canvas before a start was made, a coating of warm brown being laid down first and, if fleshpainting was part of the composition, the figure or face was drawn carefully in outline and filled in with a thick body of white, the tones and half tones being added with a mixture of three colours only—white, yellow and an earth red. This method was largely used by the Venetian painters who, by overpainting and glazing on canvases prepared in this way, obtained a translucency in their flesh tints which cannot be got in any other way. Titian, who, in his correspondence, shows he had knowledge of the chemical action and changes of paint, commenced his works in this manner.

An earlier method was, having coated the canvas with a thick layer of white, to draw in the composition and then stain the white with dyes, the picture being then proceeded with in side-colours and finally finished in oils.

It will thus be seen that either for the purpose of retouching or of painting a picture it is not only

advisable but necessary to use only the best pigments on the market. It is surely difficult enough to paint good colour with properly ground and permanent material, and where inferior colours are used, even if a partial temporary success is sometimes achieved, the paints will change colour sooner or later and the effort be useless. Correggio is supposed to have obtained the extraordinary translucency found in his works by the employment of some sort of wax. And it is certainly the case that both he and Titian fused their colours in a sun bath—that is, a glazed chamber which excluded dust and allowed the rays of a southern sun to beat directly on the canvas. This would be a very severe test of the permanency of most of the cheap pigments vended now-a-days, in particular the madder colours.

Signatures.

Far too much importance is usually put on the question as to whether or not a work is signed, whereas it is, apart from being a means of identification, of little importance if the picture is genuine. It is worth while remembering that an indifferent man can paint a name on a picture who would make a very poor job at painting the picture itself, and that there are many unscrupulous people, who, if they have something to sell which they rightly or wrongly attribute to, say, Reynolds, eagerly search it for a signature, and, if they cannot find one, come to the conclusion that if it is not signed it ought to be, and so they soon make that all right, overlooking the fact that many artists rarely, if ever, signed their work. Out of all the pictures painted by Reynolds only some eight or ten are known to be signed, as it was not his general habit to do so, and the same thing applies to Raeburn, Gainsborough and many others. Of course a spurious signature can generally be detected, but it is often a matter

of some difficulty, more especially if a number of years have passed since the name was painted. We knew of a small picture being cleaned recently of which some of its former owners were evidently doubtful as to whether it was the work of Morland or Herring. During the process of removing the various coats of varnish, five different signatures were unearthed, each of which had been obscured, two had plumped for Herring and three for Morland. As a matter of fact the picture was a poor example of Morland's work, but it was an instance of how little faith one ought to place in a name on a picture, unless he can be absolutely certain it was really put on by the artist.

Without doubt a great many pictures which bear no signature were at one time signed, and the signatures have been taken off in the process of cleaning. This is easily understood if one remembers that an artist does not generally print his name but writes it, and, in order to make the brush flow nicely, he uses some vehicle to make the paint work easily. Accordingly, most signatures are thinly painted, and being put on after the work is finished, often some considerable time after, remain on the surface of the paint, do not amalgamate, and are very easily removed or damaged if care is not taken.

Again the colour of the paint used for the name is often so like the portion of the picture on which it is painted that, with the changes of colour due to time, even a slight coat of varnish obscures it, and unless this is removed absolutely the signature cannot be seen.

It is usual to find a signature in one of the bottom corners of a picture, but some painters, especially the old Dutch painters, signed anywhere on the canvas, for instance on the bow or stern of a ship, on the bough of a tree, or on an inn sign. We give some examples of signatures from authenticated pictures. A signature is of more interest than value, as is shown by the fact that an overwhelming majority of the greatest pictures in the world are not signed.

Dirt and varnish sometimes gather in the interstices of the brush work, and when the bottom corners are being cleaned, fear of removing a possible signature causes some of this to be left, and it is extraordinary how like a signature the formation sometimes takes. In many cases it is possible to read any name one likes, with the aid of a sanguine and fertile imagination, whereas, in truth, there is nothing there but a little dirty varnish. A picture which cannot be attributed to any one in particular

without the necessity of peering at it through a reading-glass to endeavour to find a signature is not generally of much value.

As a rule a painter signs a picture in an entirely different way to the manner in which he signs a letter, and it is amusing to see a picture bearing a signature which obviously has been copied from some letter. Oil paintings are not signed with pens.

What has always been considered to be Lowestoft china has within the last few years been proved to have been manufactured elsewhere than at Lowestoft, and even yet some of those interested in the subject are arguing and differing as to what is the real article. Something of the same sort is frequently happening with pictures, and works ascribed to one man for generations are now being found to have been painted by some one else. In several of the most important galleries in Europe there are examples of pictures with wrong names attached to them, which the various authorities would freely admit, but for some reason, best known to themselves, do not trouble themselves to alter the catalogues.

The collector who has discriminating taste will soon come to realise that if he has a good example

of a great painter's work it is immaterial whether it is signed or not, as the quality of the work will be the only needful recommendation.

The person who on being shown a really fine work asks "Is it signed?" is on a par with him who, after an exhaustive look, exclaims, "And what a beautiful frame!" Though it is disheartening work showing pictures to people of this sort, it is comforting to feel that they invariably pick up some idea of the beautiful, however little, and the pleasure one derives from showing his pictures to an enthusiast is very real.

Landscape Painting.

No branch of art has made so much progress in recent years as that of landscape painting, and there is little doubt that though the Old Masters, both in portraiture and large figure compositions, still stand supreme, the modern painter of landscapes starts from a higher visual plane and treats his subject with a sympathetic insight, producing a work not only artistically but scientifically correct.

This has largely been brought about by a more thoughtful way of looking at nature. The old school of landscape painters looked at the scene they were about to paint, went home and endeavoured to remember what they saw, whereas the newer school endeavour to paint not only what they see, but what they feel, and do their work strictly on the spot. Thus the grand colour and noble composition of old time masters was usually wasted for lack of appreciation of atmosphere and sympathy with nature. The highest art does not simply depict the bare facts of things, but clothes

the bare facts with a suggestion of music, of lovely odours and of life. In looking at a coloured photograph of a highland glen, the eye is soon satisfied and the picture put down; if on the other hand a good painting of the same subject is looked at, one feels the smell of the heather, hears the plaintive cry of the plover, and considers whether or not there are trout in that brown stream—in fact the painting stimulates the imagination, while the photograph does not. One reason for this is that the ordinary photograph gives too much detail, leaving nothing to the imagination, and accordingly obstructs suggestion on the part of the beholder. If an artist paints what he sees without leaving anything to the imagination he limits his own powers, and the onlooker cannot interweave his own ideas. A question of taste thus arises as to what is the proper amount of detail to show in a picture, as too much detail conduces to a loss of breadth and atmosphere. This again resolves itself into the question of impressionism. A certain amount of impressionism is necessary, but it is difficult to understand how some painters of recent years have had such fleeting impressions of what they regarded. At one time it was simply an excuse for the younger school to omit all conscientious work, and having put a few

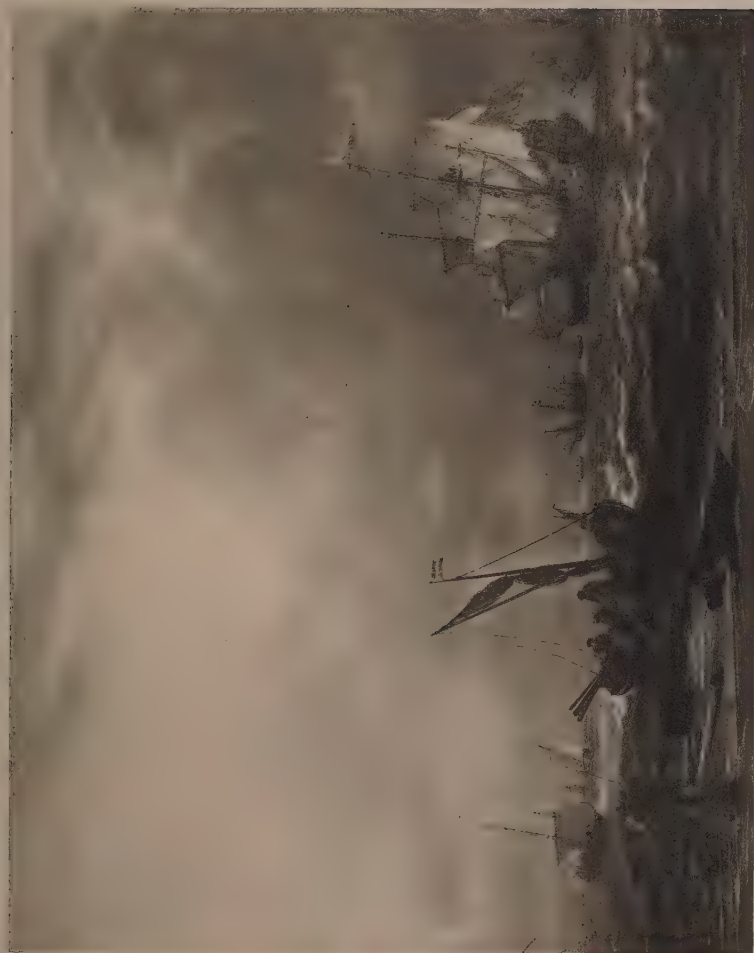
wild, reckless strokes on the canvas, to leave so much to the imagination as to create doubt as to whether the picture was right end up. Nevertheless the recent activity of what is known as the Impressionist School did an immense amount of good to landscape painting by showing how to look at things. The beauties of effects of light have long been understood and happily treated, but it is only in comparatively recent years that proper attention has been paid to the true feeling of nature. The broad restful masses of light and shade, as treated by Jacob Ruysdael, the accurate draughtsmanship and power of seeing distant perspective, place him at the head of the older school of landscape painters, notwithstanding his tendency to be somewhat sombre in his effects; and he was one of the first to realise and successfully depict the varying effects on trees, water and land, of changing light and atmospheric conditions.

This subtle power can be more readily understood by looking at good examples of Corot, in some of whose works it is possible to feel the waving of the boughs, the flutter of the leaves and the singing of the birds, though none of these things are represented in detail.

The more delicate portions of landscapes should

always be examined, as damage is frequently caused by cleaning. Those parts of the canvas where foliage and delicate branches come against the sky usually suffer most in this way, and the defects cannot be readily detected unless in a good light. Never buy pictures in an artificial light; there is nothing like daylight for showing up faults and blemishes. Endeavour to get the dealer, if the transaction is of sufficient importance, to send the picture to your house and hang it, on approval, for a few days. This is a very good test, as its qualities can be compared with other work hanging near it.

In old seascapes there will often be found a great difference in the qualities of the component parts of the work, possibly a very good sky effect with the water poorly painted, or the shipping badly drawn, looking more like toy boats than actual vessels. Simon de Vlieger, for example, the teacher of Vandervelde, was frequently successful with his skies, but marred his picture by indifferent treatment of the sea. Examples of seascapes by William Vandervelde have fine sky and sea effects, and with the shipping massed boldly on the canvas, make a grand composition, but unfortunately many of his canvases are in bad condition. As a rule Dutch pictures of this description are painted with a



great knowledge of aerial perspective and invariably have a bold and powerful decorative quality, being cleverly composed. It sometimes happens that the rigging having been delicately painted has been rubbed off by cleaners and coarsely put back again, but when the original painting of the ropes and masts is preserved it is always dexterous. The treatment of shipping in calm hot weather, vessels in choppy seas at harbour mouths and boats scudding before the wind, show that nature in her various moods has been appreciated and studied.



Some famous British Painters.

In the history of British portraiture the outstanding painters are Reynolds, Gainsborough, Romney, Hoppner and Raeburn. These men reached a standard of excellence never before touched by an English artist, easily dwarfing the long list of portrait painters who had practised in this country since the days of Vandyck.

Sir Joshua Reynolds was the son of a schoolmaster, and was born in 1723. His father and grandfather were clergymen, his mother and maternal grandmother daughters of clergymen, and his father had two brothers also clergymen. Accordingly the boy was brought up in an atmosphere of learning, and received a good education. He became a man of cultivated tastes in literature as well as in art, and his acquaintance with such a man as Johnson no doubt had its influence in perfecting his diction, and possibly enabled him to deliver those discourses which have become famous. He first brought his name into prominence with a full length portrait of Commodore Keppel. He had a

great appreciation of the Old Masters, whose works he most carefully studied, and it is interesting to note that when he first saw the works of the latter he was unimpressed and quite unable to appreciate them until he studied them. He says, "I found that those persons only who, from natural imbecility, appeared to be incapable of ever relishing those divine performances, made pretensions to instantaneous raptures on first beholding them." This is an object lesson of the folly of untrained people professing to be able immediately to recognise the great in the art of painting, and the same absurdity is even more common in the world of music. He was made President of the Academy on its foundation in 1768. Some writers say there are but three pictures known, which bear his undoubted signature—"Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse," "Lady Cockburn" and "Viscountess Cockburn," but "Master Bouverie" and "Horace Walpole" are also signed, and very possibly there are others, though it was not his general practice. His signature on one of his works reads "S. Reynolds pinxt 1757."

Reynolds devoted a considerable amount of time to the study of the works of Michael Angelo, Titian and Rembrandt. He was constantly chang-

ing his reds and trying experiments with his pigments, in order to get as rich colour as possible. Sometimes he painted a face in a single flesh tint and got his colour by numerous subsequent glazings, which in many cases have either been cleaned off or have faded away. When his pigments have stood, as is fortunately the case in many of his best works, he has succeeded in getting colour which exceeds in beauty that of any of his contemporaries. Reynolds had many advantages which a portrait painter nowadays has not got. He lived in a great age, an age when it was the mode for men of fashion, of letters and of genius to foregather, and to sharpen their wits on each other, and most of all, there being no photography then, people had leisure and inclination to sit for their portraits more than they have now. He was particularly happy in his rendering of children, such as "Master Bunbury" and the "Age of Innocence," and his picture of the "Duchess of Devonshire" playing ride-a-cock-horse with her little daughter is a delightful representation of maternal love.

He painted so many fine portraits that it would be difficult to choose his best examples. Without any doubt he was the greatest painter this country has yet produced. He died in 1792.

Gainsborough had an entirely different touch, and was able to give a grace and charm to his portraits of fair women which has never been surpassed, while his capabilities as a landscape painter stood him in good stead with the backgrounds of his pictures. His landscape work is painted with a peculiar free touch which is easily recognised when once seen. Though generally given a second place after Reynolds, he is by many considered at least his equal, and certainly some of his best portraits of women, such as the Hon. Mrs. Graham, have not been beaten by his great contemporary, and possibly not by any one else of any nationality.

He was born at Sudbury in Suffolk in 1727, and was the son of a clothier and woollen manufacturer. He was a handsome man, but modest and of a convivial disposition. He married, when he was nineteen, Miss Margaret Burr, who was a devoted wife with such business instincts as enabled her to prevent Gainsborough from spending his money too recklessly. Perhaps she felt more justified in interfering with his financial affairs as she had an income of £200 a year of her own, which was of the greatest assistance to him in the early part of his career. When he was thirty-three he went to Bath, then a most fashionable resort, and here he was soon



hard at work painting notabilities. He charged the modest sum of five guineas at this time for a 30 x 25, but he had so many commissions that he soon felt justified in considerably raising his price, but even then he charged a ridiculously small sum for such work.

His pictures, freely painted and refined in colour, are perhaps more replete with grace than the work of any other portrait painter. His costumes are always beautifully treated, and often in his full lengths the whole figure is set in a lovely landscape with the perfection of dignity. Mrs. Siddons, the Duchess of Devonshire, the Baillie family, and most people of influence and rank in his day were subjects for his brush. He died in 1788.

George Romney was born in 1734. His father was a small yeoman farmer in the Cumberland Fells, who also carried on a carpenter's business, and had some considerable natural aptitude for such drawing and design as was useful in his occupation. Romney, when he was but twenty-two, married a domestic servant who had nursed him through an illness. Some six years later he went to London, leaving his wife, who ultimately went to live with his father. The original cause of this was his poverty, but, strange to say, he never

sent for her and seldom went to see her, although he kept her as well supplied with money as his means would allow. He went to Rome in 1773 to study the Old Masters, and on his return, being assisted by the friendship and patronage of the Duke of Richmond, he soon made a name for himself, and had as many sitters as he could find time to paint.

There seems to have been some ill-feeling betwixt him and Sir Joshua Reynolds, as they never became friends, and it even appears that they were jealous of each other. He refused to exhibit in the Royal Academy, and he never showed a picture on its walls. He was a quiet unassuming man, who took no pleasure in going to those functions to which his genius opened the door for him. He died in 1802.

Possibly his best known works are his pictures of Lady Hamilton, whose portrait he painted a great number of times, posing as Diana, Cassandra, Bacchante, Cecilia, etc.

The modelling of the faces of his sitters is done with a full brush used with confidence, and in his draperies he was fond of a white, which he used with sound judgment, a good example of which can be seen in the National Gallery in Mrs. Mark

Currie. He was a forceful draughtsman, with a great power of suggesting the character of his sitter ; there is a quality about his drawing which, though not always perfectly accurate as to detail, gives an easy pose to his portraits, and is one of the first things which strikes one on seeing his work. The drawing of hands in his pictures is full of character, such as in his portrait of the Countess of Westmoreland, Mrs. Raikes and Mrs. Lee Acton. A peculiarity of his hands of men can be seen in the strong-looking thumbs and slightly thick wrists. He used good colour with a simple palette, and many of his pictures are in as good condition to-day as when they were first painted. Sometimes his canvases have an unfinished look about the corners, in some cases even the canvas being barely covered.

A remarkable fact about Romney's work is that though in his life he received the highest appreciation, immediately after his death his pictures were considered of little or no value, and sold for a trifle, in some cases a few shillings, and that almost fifty years passed before his work was properly appreciated, and reached the high monetary value it has to-day.

Examples of either of these three painters are

remarkable for the freedom and strength of the brushwork, the good modelling of the face, and the free and unobtrusive treatment of the background. The landscape backgrounds in the portraiture of all three have often a very similar feeling but invariably show the high standard of the painter, and copyists, who might be able to work at a face until it had a resemblance to their work, always fail miserably when attempting to reproduce the bold handling of the background. The effect of a portrait depends very largely on the background, and though the face is the point of most interest the skill necessary to paint the accessories is just as great. The feeling of the present day among artists is against landscape backgrounds being used in portraiture, and, no doubt, the more simple treatment of Velasquez and Whistler is on a higher plane, requiring greater skill and knowledge. Reynolds and his confrères frequently painted a figure in the indoor lighting of a studio, while the background distinctly told that the figure was supposed to be seen in the general lighting of an open garden. Notwithstanding this departure from actual truth, however, the landscape portraits of the early nineteenth century painters are beautiful and highly decorative, and have a peculiar charm,

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which is probably unequalled in any other school of portraiture.

Scotland has as yet not been so prolific in great portrait painters as England, yet Sir Henry Raeburn, who is to Scotland what Reynolds is to England, with ease holds his own with the best men the latter country has produced. Many of his portraits of ladies and children are of a very high standard, but he is seen at his best in his likenesses of men. Possessed of a great insight into character and of a simple directness of brushwork, he was an indefatigable worker, and would often receive six different sitters in one day. He, too, was fortunate in his sitters, having had most of the men of note in the country sitting to him. The ease with which he massed his tones and got the expression of a face by the shadows of the features gives a breadth to his work not unlike Velasquez. Whether the market value of his pictures in future years goes up or down, it is certain that his position beside Reynolds, Gainsborough and Romney will always remain undisputed.

Carlyle says somewhere that the best way to get an insight into the character of an historical person is to study a portrait of him, even if a bad one; that one will get more truth out of it than from any

amount of writing. If this is so, and probably it is, what room for study there is in Raeburn's portraits of great Scotsmen, for he lived in a time when great men were not only born in Scotland but resided there. Scotland has had several good landscape painters, notably Thomson, MacCulloch and Sam Bough, but as a portrait painter Raeburn is in a class by himself, the reputation of Jameson being somewhat enhanced by the fact that there had not been any great predecessor in his country, and in fact Raeburn is the only portrait painter in Scotland who has reached greatness.

The great majority of Raeburn's pictures are painted on a cross-twilled canvas, so often, in fact, that this sort of canvas is referred to as "Raeburn canvas," although Reynolds, Romney and others frequently used it. This canvas gives a peculiar drag to the brush, and sometimes when he used a smoother kind it has caused hesitation as to the authenticity of the picture, simply because it gave a different surface. A well-known portrait of Sir Walter Scott is sometimes discredited simply for this reason by those who cannot reconcile their eyes to the somewhat unfamiliar canvas. Had he preferred twilled canvas, which is probable, there is no doubt that he would often be so

situated as to be unable to procure it when he wanted it.

A more interesting mistake that is often made with portraits by this artist is the ascribing to him of pictures by George Watson, the first president of the Scottish Academy, who should not be confounded with Sir John Watson Gordon. For some reason there is a belief that the men who painted somewhat in his style were Nicholson, Syme and others, whereas George Watson's work is not so well known. Many of his portraits of ladies are very beautiful, notwithstanding the faint praise he has received from a recent writer. As a rule he signed in large letters on the back of the canvas, but this will be obscured if the picture has been relined.

Sometimes his work is so like his greater fellow-countryman's, that the best judges can almost be deceived, and it is well to remember that the wish is father to the thought, and that any one having a fine portrait like the work of a great painter is, in these days of big prices, too prone to ascribe it to him. The similitude is most noticeable in his portraits of ladies, and it is certainly strange that about twenty of his portraits of men can be seen for one lady's. This certainly lends colour to the belief that many "Raeburns" hanging in various well-known collec-

tions, which the initiated know were not painted by Raeburn, were probably painted by George Watson.

We give his portrait, painted by himself, facing p. 64, by which the pose, texture and general treatment may be compared to Raeburn. The quality of paint and general success as a picture are not inferior to many of Raeburn's male portraits, while the placing of the shadows of the features is very similar.

There is a strong probability that, when all the works of Reynolds, Raeburn, Romney, etc. are safely placed in permanent galleries, the works of this lesser painter will be properly recognised and eagerly acquired.

All these painters were hard workers and fortunate in having as many sitters as they could paint, one reason being the small price they charged for what are now world-known works of art. For years Reynolds painted heads for from five to ten guineas, and when Raeburn was well appreciated he had diffidence in asking fifty; whereas in these days five hundred and seven hundred and fifty guineas is quite a common price to ask for some modern work of little merit. The result naturally is that few people can afford to have their portraits painted, and the painters who have half-a-dozen sitters a day are very few; accordingly



the portrait-painter of to-day does not get the same amount of practice and experience, and rarely, if ever, paints with the same facility. As a rule, owing to lack of employment, when he does get a sitter he has too much time to devote to his work, and does not paint with simplicity and directness, but overworks his canvas. There is plenty of room to-day for a skilled portrait-painter, who, if he had the talents of a Reynolds, could depict, for a future generation to admire, the silk hat and frock coat of a Londoner, which costume, if viewed artistically, will lend itself to pictorial treatment equally with the costume of many previous periods of history. The portrait-painter who can make a great artistic picture of a man in a silk hat has not yet arrived, but there is no reason why it could not be done.

Drawing and Composition.

It may be noticed that many famous painters, sometimes in an important work, introduce a piece of drawing that even a young student would be ashamed of. In listening to a conversation as to who painted a picture, for instance a Rubens, the remark may be heard, "Look at that hand; Rubens never painted a hand like that," etc. This is simply nonsense. The greatest men often produced a badly-drawn hand and even limb, and examples of these inaccuracies of draughtsmanship can frequently be seen in any fair-sized exhibition. Some instances are so bad as to make one wonder how an artist, capable of such grand work as the rest of the picture, could let such bad work out of his studio.

Bad drawing does not only mean drawing anatomically inaccurate, but any drawing which is unbeautiful. It is quite possible to draw the ugly beautifully. Good drawing is not confined to the making of a correct outline, but includes the formation of shadows. The broad direct way

Raeburn painted the shadows on a face, the lips, eyes and under the nose was his principal method of obtaining the character of his sitter, the success of a likeness depending largely on the formation, tone and colour of the shadows. In fact the whole strength and expression of a face depends very largely on the shadows.

It is worth while to study the drawing of the folds of draperies of all kinds. Most draperies look as if they had been made wet and then frozen to help the draughtsmen, and it is only rarely that flowing graceful draperies are seen on a canvas. As well as all these, good drawing includes beauty of line, suggestion of the requisite movement or action, and feeling.

The ceiling and walls of the Sistine Chapel at the Vatican, by Michael Angelo, are among the finest examples of drawing in the world; the foreshortening of the limbs being wonderful. Much of the mural work in ecclesiastical buildings in Italy bears witness to the knowledge of anatomy of the Old Masters, and in very many cases the figures at a great height are so drawn as to allow for the elevation and to appear correctly proportioned from the floor, the upper parts being gradually enlarged. It makes one feel on seeing some of these colossal

ceiling paintings, often containing scores of figures in every conceivable position of foreshortening, that painting on an ordinary size of canvas should be easy in comparison. It is impossible to draw the human figure without a good knowledge of anatomy, and this the old time painters of Italy possessed to an extraordinary degree of excellence.

The collection of chalk drawings by these artists in the British Museum shows the pains they took with their studies ; often when a difficult part was encountered, such as a hand or foot, it would be repeated by itself in a corner of the paper. How few artists now take the trouble to make any studies at all before beginning the canvas proper.

Our very best living men have a long way to travel yet before they can draw like Michael Angelo, Raffael or Correggio.

A picture may be moderately pleasing without having good colour and without good lighting if it is well drawn, but if the drawing is bad neither colour nor anything else will retrieve it. The elementary principles of drawing are a true sense of the relative proportion of things and power to make the direction of line beautiful and suggestive.

The placing together of the various incidents to be depicted, so that they fill the canvas and do not

crowd it and balance happily together, is one of the most difficult things in the making of a picture. A very large picture would often be much better if only half the size, simply owing to its lack of interest, owing to a lack of feeling and detail, the omission of which would not have been so noticeable in a smaller picture.

Some of the enormous stretches of canvas in the Pitti and Uffizi Galleries at Florence are very remarkable, over and above their other qualities, for the simple yet powerful way they are grouped and placed in the picture, all the picture being filled, yet in places treated with only the necessary interest that will not detract from the adjoining parts.

Rubens' "Descent from the Cross" is generally considered one of the best examples of good composition in Europe.

It is quite common to see a good portrait of a head spoiled as to effect by being placed too low or too high on the canvas, or, in the case of a profile, having the background on the side towards which the face is turned too narrow in proportion to that behind the head, or by the size of the head being too small or too large for the size of the picture. A man's portrait is rarely a success if less than life size,

unless it is considerably less, leaving no doubt that it was not meant to be life size.

Perhaps the oldest form of pictorial composition is that in the shape of a pyramid or of an inverted pyramid. The former is seen frequently in old religious subjects, and the latter in old figure pictures and landscapes. A lesson in originality of composition as well as combination of colour can be got by a study of old Japanese prints. In many cases the artist follows no set lines, and yet it is a rare thing to see an old Japanese print that is not well placed on the paper.

Everybody has some idea of composition, but most people require to have it trained, and it is wonderful what uses it can be put to. When a lady goes round her drawing-room moving a chair here, pushing a china figure there, and so on, she is probably unaware that it is simply her natural craving for composition which is urging her to make a balance of things, an arrangement. An arrangement is simply a composition, whether done on the mantel-piece, on the floor or painted in a picture.

There is no rule as to what is good or bad composition, and, after all, it simply resolves itself into the question—Is the picture nicely balanced?

Canvases are sometimes trimmed to another

size, either because of damage or because some portion offends the eye—perhaps a badly-drawn hand, but this should not be done without serious consideration as, naturally, it alters the whole balance of the work, and a hole in the canvas or a badly drawn hand is better than an ill-balanced picture.

Some Painters to study in Public Galleries.

An example of the irony of fate is that many men of genius live and die unappreciated by their contemporaries, and even centuries may elapse before their merit is acknowledged. Collectors and connoisseurs buy the work of a young rising artist in the hope and belief that they are securing something which will one day, soon they hope, be precious, often only to find that his powers of soaring do not suffice to raise him above the level of mediocrity ; and, in these days of competition and comparison, the man who follows an art as a profession who cannot go on beyond that stage finds it a matter of considerable difficulty to make a living, and the sadness of it lies in the fact that not only must talent be cultivated to greatness, but the public must be educated to recognise greatness when put before them. Possibly Rembrandts, Raphaels, Shakespeares and Wagners are living and dying among us, crushed in their early manhood through lack of encouragement.

But, be that as it may be, the fact is certain there is much work of old-time painters being constantly sold throughout this country which an artist would be enraptured with, and which the connoisseur knows of and admires the greatness of, and yet of which the market value is little. Surely, in these days when the arts are taught as part of education, often irrespective of the question whether the pupil has talent or not, good work should stand on its own merit, and not be estimated by fashion, but the fact remains that some great names are overshadowed by the greatest names, and many pictures by great men, pictures of exquisite quality, have been exposed for sale in auction rooms for generations, at various periods, and failed to bring more than a few pounds. The reason may be that the general public are only acquainted with the names of the greatest masters, but how can one account for the apathy of the connoisseur? However, there are signs that in a few years old pictures of good quality will not be picked up for the trifling sums they can now be acquired for, and people are getting to know that if a work strikes them as being a work of merit, though, perhaps, rather dark and dingy, a guinea or two paid to an experienced cleaner will remove the discoloured varnish, and possibly make



the picture as good as when it was painted. It is the cultivation of this gift of being able to recognise good work under dirt and varnish that is the only hope of finding a treasure. Dirty varnish not only takes the light out of a picture and obscures the colour, but in doing so protects the fugitive pigments, and it is sometimes difficult to make the owner believe on returning the canvas cleaned that it has not had a considerable amount of repaint applied to it.

This short list is given of painters whose work can still be found with some frequency in this country. It is not meant to be a biography, but the names are suggested as artists whose work should be studied by anyone wishing to form a collection, and we point out as they occur to us the condition of the canvas or panel as most frequently found, with a few suggestions which may help in identification.

It should not be forgotten that most artists constantly repeat themselves. As an instance, if an illustrated work on Teniers is examined it will at once be evident that not only did he use the same model in several different works, but in many cases repeated the same figure in almost the same pose. Also there is Wouverman's horse, with its plump appearance, and the jar or water bottle of Zuccarelli, appearing as a rule on one of the figures, which is understood

to be his signature, derived from *zucco* a gourd ; and again, the withered tree which Nicholas Berghem and Salvator Rosa sometimes introduced. The latter painter also frequently used the same figures very slightly altered.

Of the painters of the German School the outstanding name in portraiture is Hans Holbein, born in 1498. He came to England and was patronised by Henry VIII., who, it is said, was so struck with his genius that, in protecting him from the fury of a nobleman whom he had in some way offended, he said, "I can, if I please, make seven lords of seven ploughmen, but I cannot make one Holbein of seven lords." He painted many excellent miniatures as well as the well-known large portraits of many of the notabilities of the reign of Henry VIII. He was also an engraver on wood, in which art he achieved great distinction.



Il Tintoretto (Jacopo Robusti) was born at Venice in 1519. He was one of the most powerful painters of the Venetian school, his proper value being not yet fully appreciated in the art world. He was one of the greatest of the Great Masters, and could paint a large canvas, full of figures, in a couple of days. He was possessed of marvellous

facility, and seemed to combine all those qualities which distinguish the greatest painters. The best examples of his work are in Venice. He sometimes worked so like Titian that there are several instances of famous portraits being accredited to first one and then the other. He probably excelled Titian in the conception of the composition of his large works. He is only known to have signed three or four pictures. His portraits, like those of several other great masters of the Italian school, can, for some unexplainable reason, be sometimes found in England in the most unexpected places. His paint has a dry-looking quality and his handling of the hair and beard in portraiture should be noted.



Paul Bril, born in 1554, was a landscape painter ; very often his works are either too yellow or too green. He both painted very large and very small pictures. He had a bold, free pronounced touch not unlike that of Salvator Rosa.



Peter Neefs was born at Antwerp in 1570. His pictures of interiors of Cathedrals when once seen can easily be identified again by their truthful perspective and delicacy of finish. The latter

quality is so marked that in the event of a blemish occurring to a work of his it would be almost impossible to match the paint. His pictures are rare, the great majority of works of a similar subject sold at auction rooms as his being by other painters.



John Breughel, born about 1575 (the exact date is not known), is called Velvet Breughel, because he wore a velvet cloak; the idea that it was because of the high finish of his pictures is erroneous. His landscapes as a rule are crammed full of incident, like his famous picture of "Paradise," in which the figures were painted by Rubens. His colouring is very vivid, so much so that in some of his pictures where he introduced birds, flowers, figures, animals and fishes all on one canvas, he fatigues the eye with too much colour; in his landscapes blue predominates to an undue extent, particularly in the hills and far distance. His detail is wonderfully minute, and yet broad in effect as a whole. He was, even among his fellow artists, considered an expert at painting flowers, which he introduced successfully into the foregrounds of his canvases. His most successful pictures were, probably, those of comparatively small dimensions, crammed full of figures, horses and a carriage or

two, the figures in the distance being as finished as those in the foreground.

BRUEGHEL 1621 *Br. inven.*

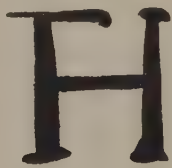


Peter Paul Rubens, born in 1577, was a great colourist and draughtsman, and a master of composition. The quality of his flesh painting is superb. He was fond of introducing a particular red, which colour usually is prominent in his work. His type of female beauty, though heavy, is human. He signed his name in full, in rather small characters. A very large number of pictures attributed to him emanated from his studio, but were painted by his pupils. He was a man of exceptional attainments, speaking seven languages and possessing much culture, and was employed in several ambassadorial missions. His greatest pupil was Vandyck, whose earlier work shows markedly the influence of the master. He died in 1640.



Frans Hals, born about 1580, was perhaps the most dexterous wielder of a brush the world has seen ; his pictures give the impression that his brush flew over the canvas with great speed, touching exactly where wanted with a clean crisp stroke which

required no further labour. One of the greatest masters of portraiture, he was painting, probably, at his best when seventy years of age, and was over eighty when he painted the two large portrait groups of the Governors and Lady Governors of the Old Men's Hospital, of which he was an inmate. He signed with a simple monogram. His works rarely come into the market.



Josef Ribera (Lo Spagnoletto), born near Valencia in 1588, was one of the great painters of the Spanish school. He usually painted large works, but studies of heads by him are to be found in this country, painted with almost brutal force, the hair and beard being dashed on with bold touches in a very realistic way. He was the master of Guercino and Salvator Rosa among others. He used freely dark browns and blacks in the shadows of his flesh painting, and like most of his school his work looks sombre. There are not many of his large canvases in this country.

Diego Rodriquez Silva y Velasquez, the greatest of all Spanish painters, and by most people considered the greatest portrait painter of any nationality, was born at Seville in 1594. Philip IV. knighted him and gave him a pension. His portrait of Innocent X. is one of the greatest pictures in the world, and all his portraits have a quiet dignity unsurpassed by any other painter. His brushwork displays that simple directness which is only in the power of a genius, while, his colour being good, his treatment of darks and greys shows extraordinary skill. Like all truly great painters, his quality of white is brilliant and refined. A powerful draughtsman, the modelling of a face evidently held no difficulties for him, and the character is always delineated with force and ease, the eyes in some of his faces seeming to be instilled with life. In a large picture by him of "The Surrender at Breda" in the Prado Gallery, Madrid, he introduced his own portrait among the numerous figures. His equestrian portraits have a dash and vigour about them which make other horses in portraiture very tame by comparison, with, perhaps, the single exception of those of Titian, whose work he studied minutely. There are only some eighty pictures by him about the authenticity of which there is no dispute, and the best of

these are in the Prado Gallery, where it is absolutely necessary to go to gain a full knowledge of the master's technique. There are a large number of pictures attributed to him which were painted by his son-in-law, Juan Baptista del Mazo; but it is believed that some of those which are genuine and have been lost may one day be discovered, although the amount of his productions was necessarily limited by his duties as Marshal of the Palace. The sombreness of the court life and the depression of the waning glories of the country influenced his colour, and while showing the marvellous capabilities of the artist, create wonder as to what his work would have been like had he lived in a brighter atmosphere.



Anthony Vandyck, born in 1599, was a pupil of Rubens, but preserved his own individuality. He was painter to Charles I. of England, who knighted him, and he painted many of the English nobility, invariably giving to his sitters an air of refinement and dignity. He had two distinct periods in his art, which may be differentiated as "Black Vandykes," under Italian influence, and "Brown Vandykes." There are some superb examples of the former in the National Gallery of Scotland, and

though popular fancy prefers the brown period, it is doubtful if the black is not the better. He painted a large number of religious pictures, some of which reached the highest standard. He did not as a rule sign, and works bearing his signature are few.

Ant. van Dyck.



Claude Gellée, better known as Claude Lorraine, born in 1600, lived for a considerable time in Italy, mostly at Rome, and accordingly his work, although preserving his own originality, has a considerable influence of the Italian school in it. He was a contemporary of Nicholas Poussin, who greatly assisted him with his work, they living near each other in Rome for some years, where Poussin was much more highly esteemed than he is by the present generation. His landscapes, always well composed, are remarkable for their beautiful skies, vapourous clouds floating in the heavens and illuminated by rainbows or beams of sunlight he rendered with much effect. His figures he kept subservient to the landscape, as he had humble ideas as to the painter-like qualities of them, although

they are frequently well drawn and painted; he said he sold his landscapes but gave presents of the figures. He published in his "*Liber Veritatis*" sketches of all his works, and kept a list of his patrons to prevent copies of his pictures being vended as the originals, an example followed by Turner, among others. The touching of his foliage somewhat resembles that of Salvator Rosa, and his canvases are remarkable for atmospheric effect and good lighting. There are six or eight fine examples in the National Gallery in London.



Albert Cuyp was born at Dordrecht in 1606; he painted still life and various rural scenes, and his landscapes with cattle are highly prized. Works by Dietrich and Borgognone are often attributed to him, though there is little similarity except in choice of subject. His aerial effects were very successful, and his fondness of painting sky and clouds caused him in many of his pictures to set his horizon low down on the canvas. He painted with a rich enamel-like quality of pigment. Good examples are sometimes in the market.



Rembrandt Van Rhyn, 1606, equally famous as

a painter and etcher, his mastery of light and shade assisting him in the art of the latter to such an extent that he has had no peer in any age. His independent personality stamps all his works with a living force, as he had a thorough knowledge of his pigments and perfect mastery of his brush. His own portrait in the Uffizzi Gallery is a perfect marvel of confident brushwork. Some of his earlier works are comparatively thinly painted, but in the great majority of his pictures the flesh painting is of a thick juicy consistency, boldly applied with a full brush. His earliest work was most minutely finished with a surface and lighting like Gerard Dow, who was a pupil of his, but he early abandoned this style for that which has made his name world famous, as is exemplified by the picture known as the "Night Watch," by the "Anatomy Lessons," and his numerous powerful portraits. He painted a few landscapes. A masterly colourist and powerful draughtsman, he produced a tremendous quantity of work of the highest standard without considering it at all necessary in his religious pictures to pay any attention to sartorial history. His knowledge of light and shade is unsurpassed, and the quality of his shadows in every respect masterly, even the darkest being translucent. He

signed a number of his pictures in a bold way, which is easily legible.

Rembrandt. f.
1650



Pietro Francesco Mola was born in 1609, and painted historical subjects and landscapes. He worked with bold colour, beautifully arranged, while his light and shade were strongly contrasted. One of his best pictures, "St. John in the Desert," is in Milan, while he several times took "The Flight Into Egypt" as his subject. His blues and reds are strongly contrasted and his foliage has a spirited touch.



David Teniers, the younger, born at Antwerp in 1610, painted tavern scenes and merry-makings with such success that he ranks among the highest of the Dutch genre painters. While his colour is bright and clear his drawing is full of life and expression, his peasants, whether singing or in the rollick and swing of a dance, are evidently closely studied from life. He painted some hundreds of pictures,

and has been copied and imitated thousands of times, often by artists of such merit that it is injudicious to purchase his works without expert advice.



John Both was born in 1610. He largely founded his style on that of Claude and Poussin. He was a fine draughtsman, the branches of his trees with the sun filtering through being especially noteworthy. He introduced a good deal of umber among his green, and the preponderance of umbers causes his work to appear somewhat colourless. His composition is usually piled high at one side either with tall trees or a rocky ravine. He was so careful with his management of light that it is said to be possible to tell what time of day he represented in his works. The figures were usually painted in his pictures by brother artists, and it is well to remember that in endeavouring to ascribe the authorship of a picture that this was a prevalent practice of the Dutch School, and that most of the landscape painters had several different artists whom they employed not only for the figures but also for the cattle.

Jan: Both 1650



Adrian Van Ostade, a pupil of Frans Hals, was born in 1610. He was one of the best painters of Dutch interiors, and was largely influenced by Teniers. His greatest qualities were his rich warm colour of beautiful enamel-like finish, the facial expression and well drawn action of his figures, while his work as a whole has not the sordid feeling of most of his school. He was most careful and conscientious as to detail and finish, and was one of the best artists of the Dutch School, though in reality he was a German, born in Lubeck. A good example is difficult to get, as much work of his has been cleaned and retouched, being in some parts thinly painted. He was possibly at his best with convivial gatherings in interiors, where, it will be noticed, the lights and shadows on the various figures have been especially studied; or else in his depiction of a village fair, with the dancers, musicians, small vendors of fruit and peasantry moving all over the canvas.

A. ostade.
1655



Bartholomew Van der Helst, 1613, a good colourist, his management of greys and blacks being especially noticeable, was one of the best portrait



painters of his country. His pictures are rarely in the market. We give an illustration of one of his pictures, a beautiful arrangement of greys with a delicate pink used as a contrast. The portrait is of Princess Maria at the age of six, and is signed in full "B. Vander Helst, 1637." His masterpiece is in Amsterdam, and contains twenty-five portraits, of which picture Sir Joshua Reynolds said it was "the first picture of portraits in the world, comprehending more of those qualities which make a perfect portrait than any other I have ever seen." His early style was carefully finished, but as he gained experience he developed a bold, straightforward method, which charms by its very simplicity. His work is not so well known in this country as it should be, but is of that kind which, the oftener it is seen the more it is admired. There are several fine pictures by him at the Royal Museum at the Hague.

B. Vander Helst
1637

* * *

Gysbrecht Hondekoeter, born at Utrecht in 1613, was a celebrated painter of fowls, whose pictures

were at one time very highly valued. The plumage of his birds is brilliant, though a blue which he sometimes used is rather too pronounced. His work can be recognised by the fine quality and treatment of the feathers on the ducks, geese and other birds in his work.



Salvator Rosa, 1614, was a landscape painter who was a pupil of Ribera. He generally introduced parties of banditti into his landscapes, with rocks and water and a few wild-looking trees. He was fond of painting a shattered trunk, standing boldly up in the side foreground. His skies have too great a preponderance of blues, across which his clouds are placed in a somewhat heavy manner.



Peter Lely, born in Westphalia in 1617, was a portrait painter. The heads in his canvas are daintily posed, with little or none of the stiffness of most of his contemporaries. The draperies in his pictures are always well painted, and particularly good is his treatment of yellows. He was knighted by Charles I. The work of Riley, an inferior painter, is often accredited to this artist. His signature,

P.L., as a monogram, is frequently found high up in the background of his portraits.

P.L.



Philip Wouwerman or Wouvermans, born at Haarlem in 1620, worked with rich luminous colour, and his landscapes, with prominent figures of cavaliers and ladies on horseback, are excellent. His horses have small heads, arched necks and flowing tails ; he very frequently introduced a white one in a conspicuous part of the canvas. This white horse is somewhat small and of a plump appearance, with a peculiar roundness about the hindquarters. As a rule he set his landscapes low down on the canvas, giving a large proportion of sky, which he painted well, of a somewhat smoothly-finished surface. His pictures generally are well preserved, but the sky and that portion of the foliage which abuts on the sky are very often found to be rubbed away and retouched by inexperienced cleaners.

Wouwerman.

Il Borgognone (Jacques Courtois) was born in 1621, and lived for some time at Rome, where he died. He was a famous painter of battle-pieces, often with cavalry charging. He sometimes initialed J. C. He used a good yellow with telling effect. He was a soldier himself, and depicted scenes in which he had been engaged, which probably accounts for the vigorous action in his work. There is a lack of atmosphere in his works giving them a hard appearance.



Nicholas Berghem, 1624-83, painted landscapes with sheep or cattle and figures. He worked with brighter colours than many of his contemporaries, amongst whom were Ruysdael and Wouverman, and finished his work with more delicacy of touch. He was a pupil of Weenix, whose daughter he married. His style is often so like that of other painters that his work may be mistaken for theirs, the part in which his hand is most discernible in cases of doubt is the quality of his skies, which are luminous, and usually have broken cloud effects. He was fond of placing a gnarled tree in his foreground. Some of his pictures have sheep, goats, donkeys and cattle all browsing together, crowded too near each other to be natural, yet making

delightful pastorals; they are life-like and well posed and have none of the stiffness which is often seen in subjects of this kind. His shadows are delightfully translucent, and his half-tones clean. Many of his panels have a rubbed appearance in the warm shadows, the grain of the wood showing through, caused by the thin transparent colours having been somewhat absorbed, as he frequently painted on panels unprepared in any way. He painted replicas of some of his pictures, being constantly urged, it is said, by his wife to make money, she making him start work at daylight and keeping him at it all day, while she appropriated all the funds that accrued to his labour. Whether this was the case or not he kept a cheerful disposition, which is apparent in the brightness of his subjects.

Berchem 1659



Jacob Ruysdael was born at Haarlem about 1628, some authorities say 1636, where he began life as a doctor. His works were not appreciated in his lifetime; he lived in poverty, and died in the almshouse. He is now considered the greatest of the old Dutch School of landscape painters, and his works are of great value. His colouring, while good, is

quiet and almost sombre, but grand and reposeful, grey being used with good judgment. Rivers, hilly lands and waterfalls were favourite subjects for his brush, which he painted with great strength, while the figures were put in by such artists as Wouvermans, Berghem and Adrian Vandervelde. The treatment of his horizon line is always good, distant buildings appearing with great truth, and the whole feeling of the picture being very fresh. Seldom, if ever, is a picture of his seen without water in it, either as a river, brook or cascade, the rushing of a stream or tumbling of a waterfall being subjects at which he remains unequalled to this day. There are some comparatively small pictures of his of a choppy sea at a harbour mouth, which are eagerly sought for. His signature, which he varied, is frequently found forged on pictures by indifferent painters. He signed in a different way at different periods of his life, and his signature should be compared with the picture to ascertain if both are of the same period.



Minderhout Hobbema, like so many great painters, was a native of Haarlem, where he was born in 1629, and was greatly influenced by Ruysdael, whose manner he sometimes approaches very closely, in

particular in small pictures. His works are usually distinctly signed and dated. The composition is more full than Ruysdael, there being more trees introduced, and the picture being painted from a nearer point of sight less use is made of distance. The treatment of his foliage is not unlike that of Ruysdael. He also lived and died a poor man, one reason being that landscape work was not in much demand when he lived, art patrons buying figure subjects, portraits and flower pieces. Good examples are rare, and when they do come into the market, properly authenticated, fetch large prices.

Mobberma



William Kalf, one of the great painters of Still Life, was born in 1630, at Amsterdam. He excelled chiefly in painting vases and glass, being probably the best Dutch painter of the latter. He used good colour and managed his lights well. He was fond of introducing into his compositions a dark red table-cloth with markings in darker colour on it, he also frequently repeated a peculiarly shaped water-bottle.



Willem Van der Velde, one of the greatest Dutch painters of shipping, was a pupil of Simon de

Vlieger, and was born in 1633. He had a pension for painting sea fights, granted under the Privy Seal of England, in the reign of Charles II. He painted the sea with great truth, storms, pleasant breezes and calms, but it is with the latter that he is considered to have achieved the greatest success. He signed his work usually with initials, and sometimes with a monogram, or in full ; it is generally found on a spar, boat or buoy in the foreground. In the illustration we give his signature is on the barrel in the foreground. Observe the massing of the clouds, and the complete though not crowded composition of the picture as a whole. His drawing of the waves and the atmospheric effect in his sky are perhaps his most excellent qualities, while his shipping is happily distributed over the canvas. He lived for about thirty years at Greenwich.



Isaiah Van der Velde, his brother, painted battles and attacks of robbers.



Adrain Van der Velde was a good engraver ; he painted landscapes with figures and cattle. He is

noticed here as he put in the figures for many famous artists' pictures, including Ruysdael.



Anthony Van der Meulen, born in Brussels in 1634, went to Paris and was employed as a battle-piece painter by Louis XIV. He was a good colourist, and his pictures are, as a rule, well preserved.



Peter Van der Meulen also painted battle-pieces. There is a lack of atmosphere in his work.



Karl du Jardin painted somewhat like Nicholas Berghem, whose pupil he was. The date of his birth is not known, there being considerable difference of opinion, some of his pictures being so dated that he would have been only sixteen years of age at the time they were painted if the generally accepted date, 1635, is accepted. His canvases are not so crowded as Berghem's and are well touched with good colour. A beautiful plum colour frequently occurs in the draperies of his figures. This painter's work is difficult to acquire in good condition, many of his works having been over-cleaned and retouched, more especially the trees, and warm browns of the foreground. His small

pictures are charming, being better composed than his larger works, and seemingly lending themselves more to his delicate method of handling. His work is highly finished of a quality almost like enamel. A ruin with a broken wall frequently recurs in his pictures.

K. DV. IARDIN.
1673. Sc

✻ ✻ ✻

Gaspard Netcher, born 1636, painted some historical and figure subjects, but more frequently portraits of a small size. His touch was very delicate and his draperies good, the texture of velvet, silk and cloth, being happily differentiated, though the folds appear too heavy. He had two sons who were portrait painters, Theodore and Constantine.

✻ ✻ ✻

Jan Steen was born in 1636, the son of a brewer, and at one time of his life he kept a tavern where many of the subjects for his pictures were enacted before his eyes. He was a boon companion of Mieris who, among other artists of note, frequented his ale house. His works, which are highly finished, are best when of a comparatively small size, into which he was able to put more action and incident

than most of his fellow-artists with four times the space at their disposal. The different types represented in his convivial gatherings, the expression on the faces and the sound perspective of his buildings bespeak the sound draughtsman. In his open air pictures, in which he generally introduced trees, the foliage is finished with great minuteness. His work is eagerly sought for, a good example frequently reaching four figures. As a rule he signed and dated his pictures. Many of his best compositions are of village life and not necessarily bacchanalian, comprising such subjects as "A Dentist," "A Fête," "Peasants playing bowls," and such like. He also painted a few religious pictures. There are a large number of contemporaneous copies which frequently appear at sale-rooms, and a few have found acceptance even in public galleries.

Sitten.



James Van Hugtenburgh, 1639, was a landscape painter, whose smaller works on panel are frequently met with.



John Van Hugtenburgh, his younger brother,

was a battle-piece painter of great excellence, his colour and drawing being good. He was also a successful engraver.



Peter de Hooge, a Dutch painter, was born in 1643. He was a fine draughtsman and good colourist, his pigment having the transparent enamel look of most of the great Dutch painters. He usually painted interiors with the sunlight streaming through a casement on the figure or figures within. Good examples are rarely met with, but one of his best pictures can be studied at the National Gallery, London.

P. D. HOOGE.



Godfrey Kneller was born at Lubeck in 1648. He was a fashionable painter in the reign of Charles II. He was very highly honoured in his life, and became a baronet in the reign of George I. His work is much stiffer than that of Lely, and the faces have not so much character, being more or less insipid, but his portraits are highly decorative, and the colour good, though the quality of paint is thinner than that of Lely, the grain of the canvas being generally distinctly visible.

Jan Van Goyen lived about 1650 ; painted coast scenes and sea pieces. He used his grays with good judgment and always was harmonious in his composition. Many of his pictures, painted on small panels, are to be met with, legibly initialed on the right or left foreground.



Cornelius du Sart was born about 1665 at Haarlem, and was a pupil of Adrian Ostade, whose manner he to some extent followed, painting with great success roistering scenes in taverns, dances, etc. He died in his fortieth year. His pictures, which are rare, are beautifully coloured, scope being found for this quality by the introduction of jars and bottles into his canvas. He rendered very truthfully diffused light in interiors, generally coming sideways through a window.

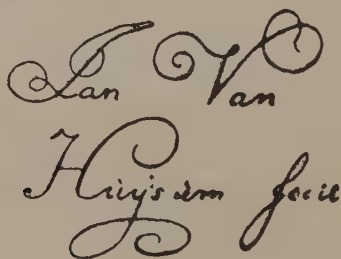


Abraham Breughel, born in 1672, should not be confounded with his namesake. He painted pictures of flowers, which are freely painted and greatly prized. They are often very black with varnish, but otherwise in good condition.



John Van Huysum, born in 1682, was a cele-

brated flower painter, who obtained large prices for his work. He painted direct from nature, studying in the gardens of the bulb growers at Amsterdam, and finishing his pictures with great delicacy. His works are rare in this country, and are sometimes found almost destroyed by cleaning, owing to his habit of painting thin and glazing till the required colour was obtained. A vase with embossed figures on it appears in several of his pictures, which have also the peculiarity of delicate trailing greenery or small twining flowers to give a broken, airy effect to his arrangement. He also painted some landscapes.



Jan Van
Huysum fecit

✻ ✻ ✻

Jean Antoine Watteau, born in 1689, is said to have kept his palette very untidy, a jumble of paint, dirt, and perhaps a dead fly or two. Whether this was the case or not, no man ever put cleaner paint on a canvas, the exquisite beauty of his colours

being one of the chief charms of his work. Compare this quality and the delicate touching with that of his followers, Lancret and Pater, who, though achieving much success, did not in any degree reach the standard of Watteau. In many of his best pictures the foliage is of a brownish tint rather than green, into which he sometimes introduced a fine silver grey. He was a sound draughtsman, and possessed the gift of imparting a feeling of poetical daintiness to the fetes, masquerades and dances he made the subjects of his pictures. Observe the well drawn hands, the poise of the figures and the expression of the faces.



Nicholas Lancret, born in 1690, studied under Watteau, so closely, indeed, that many of his works are mistaken for his master's, but they have not the quality of colour or touch. Usually his works are in very good condition.



Gerard Honthorst was born about 1592, and was famous for his candlelight effects; he also painted portraits. He usually signed his pictures, which are generally about life size, with the lighting broadly treated, the yellow candlelight spreading over faces and hands and contrasted with rich,

warm shadows. His paint is clean and solidly put on, the yellows being especially good. William, his brother, also painted portraits. He signed in bold writing characters.

Mont horst.
1653

• • •

John Baptist Pater, born in 1695, was of the Watteau school. His pictures have not the delicacy or charm of his master, yet have good qualities notwithstanding.

• • •

Antonio Canal, usually called Canaletto, was a Venetian, and was born in 1697. He excelled in painting the buildings of his native city, the perspective and lighting of which he mastered to perfection. The figures in his pictures were often put in by Tiepolo, and harmonise well with the subject, the swing of the figures on the gondolas according well with the motion of the boats. A peculiarity of his work is that it appears on first

glance to be minutely finished, whereas on closer examination this is found to be due to the accurate draughtsmanship and clever lighting displayed. As a rule he painted on a canvas which had been previously prepared with a warm brown colour, this he sometimes utilised when painting reflections in water, and left as his final paint. He painted near London for a few years, and died in Venice in 1768. He had many followers, including his nephew, but the painter who nearest approached him in style and quality was Guardi, whose pictures are often mistaken for his.



Abraham Stork, a Dutch painter of seaports and marine views, was born in 1708. His composition was something like that of Van der Velde but bolder, and though in colour his works are more sombre they are extremely well painted. He also painted country fairs, which were full of figures. It is characteristic of his work that his compositions have a singular upright appearance, even his figures at first glance giving this upward impression.



Christian Dietrich, landscape and figure painter, born in 1712, painted with good colour. His canvases have a rich brilliant effect procured by

judicious overpainting and glazing, necessitating careful handling when being restored, but the faces of his men were generally very homely. He endeavoured to imitate Rembrandt, Ostade, Berghem, and others, and even painted the same subjects posed in the same manner, succeeding so well with some of the smaller canvases as to leave a doubt as to who painted them. His touch and handling seems to have constantly varied according to the different artists he was imitating. He painted a number of small battle-pieces, usually on panels, which are attributed to Cuyp in sale rooms, some landscapes, and a number of subjects like the well-known "Strolling Musicians." A pale yellow is generally noticeable in the costumes of his soldiers.

Dietrich: Pinx. 1753:



Francesco Guardi, a Venetian, born in 1712, was a pupil of Canaletto, and closely resembles his master in his work. His perspective is very admirable and his colour refined. Good examples come into the

market occasionally, whereas those of Canaletto rarely can be found. Admirable as to perspective but with a less brilliant colour scheme than Canaletto. Generally unsigned.



Joseph Vernet, a French painter of sea pieces, usually coast scenes with a harbour, was born in 1712. He came of a painting family, and painted good pictures at the early age of eighteen. The sky effect is always good, whether depicting the early morning sun or a stormy sky. He was a clever draughtsman, and his vessels sat nicely on the water, as if they really floated, while his painting of rigging was always good, though sometimes inaccurate from a seaman's standpoint. The drawing of waves is one of the features of his work, especially in those pictures when they were rolling and breaking on the shore.



Jean Baptiste Greuze, born in 1725, excelled in portraits and genre subjects. His paintings have a peculiar softness and smoothness, which in any one else's work might be displeasing, but which constitutes his chief charm. There should be little difficulty in knowing if a work ascribed to Greuze is by him or not, if only by this characteristic.

His most successful subjects were young girls of about fifteen years, the expressions on whose faces are sweetly portrayed and the colour charming, though the figures are invariably too mature for the age of the heads.



Peter Vandyck, a Dutch painter, lived about 1750, and painted some good portraits and historical pictures. He often signed, and his pictures are sometimes confounded with his greater namesake, though having no similarity.



A. Van der Neer was a landscape painter who devoted much study to moonlight effects, and is one of the few artists who have painted moonlight with success. His pictures are rarely found in good condition. Among his best effects were views of the rivers or canals near Amsterdam, with trees and villages on the banks, while the moonlight filled the sky and was reflected in the water. He also painted winter scenes. He was born in 1619 and died in 1683.



Simon de Vlieger, who painted many fine sea-scapes, was born at Amsterdam about 1612. He was Van der Velde's master, and has suffered in

reputation through being surpassed by him. His skies are often as good as this more famous marine painter, though his painting of the sea is not, while the numerous figures on ships, boats, etc. have a grotesque and wooden appearance. Many of his works are in as good condition as when painted, being on wooden panels, and the paint so hard that the cleaners cannot easily harm it. He signed in full and dated his pictures on some object in the picture, not necessarily in the foreground.

Auction Sales.

Always visit any and every collection of pictures that can be conveniently seen, as much information can be gathered even in auction rooms, especially on those days preceding sales, when the pictures are on view. The principal things to guard against are old copies and works over-cleaned and faked with repaint. Only knowledge of the work of the painter to whom a work is attributed will help in the first instance, and so far as the second is concerned, it is impossible to be too scrutinising and careful.

Notwithstanding all that is said to the contrary, there are bargains to be picked up in a saleroom, but do not expect to find pictures by Correggio, Titian and Rembrandt wherever you go. Though you take the work of such men as your standard, be content to get genuine examples of much lesser men. There are as a rule one or two good pictures in every poor sale, and often they can be bought for an old song, as the whole collection gives a bad

impression and buyers do not attend in such numbers as when some connoisseur's gallery is being sold, and accordingly prices rule low. Furthermore, in a sale of trashy pictures one is so apt to be rubbed the wrong way that the one work worth having may easily be overlooked.

The hobby of collecting pictures is one which, unless carefully guarded against, becomes almost a mania, so only those works should be bought which one feels sure are really good. Notwithstanding this, the beginner, strive as he may, will at first be unable to resist purchasing trash, and the only safeguard is to take with him some one he knows to have a sound knowledge of the class of work he is desirous of acquiring. On inquiring among his acquaintances for a friend who can assist him, he will probably be surprised at the number of people who profess to know all about everything, whereas, when he himself does at length gain some knowledge after close study, he will realise how little he knows after all. In matters pertaining to art, the more one knows, the more he realises there is still much to learn.

If you, after consideration, resolve to buy at a sale, do not stand in front of it collecting a crowd, nor discuss it from across the room, with furtive

glances towards it, as you never can tell who is watching, and many small dealers and others are only too ready to follow the lead of any one who they think knows better than themselves. Having made up your mind to buy, fix with yourself what will be your maximum limit, and let no excitement of bidding carry you beyond it. Make this a stern rule, even if you see a well-known collector bidding, as he may not have examined it, and if he has, you may be sure if it is worth having he will give a good price for it.

When you have been unable to see the collection while on view, and during the sale "just wander in out of curiosity," it is most advisable to "just wander out again" before you are the possessor of a lot of things you would be better without. Residents in a city with a good public gallery have the advantage, not made enough use of, of comparing the pictures on sale with those in the gallery by the same painters, and can be pretty sure if there is not any similarity where the deficiency exists.

It sometimes happens that before one has got out of the saleroom with his acquisition he is offered a profit on his purchase ; it is almost invariably more profitable to retain the picture, as on those comparatively rare occasions, it is usually something worth

having. Never buy solely because a thing is cheap. If it is cheap and good that is all right, but nothing is cheap at any price if it is not good.

It takes some years to form even a small collection of good quality, and it is an easy matter to gather a lot of mediocre pictures of which one cannot dispose, and it is astonishing the space they occupy when taken off the walls.

It is usually advisable when disposing of early purchases in a saleroom, if you are not absolutely certain who the artist is, to have them put in the catalogue as "artist unknown," as a good "unknown" work generally fetches more than a good work wrongly ascribed. It is an amusing peculiarity of auctionroom sales to have a catalogue filled with the names of the greatest in art, and on seeing the list without the pictures it is sufficient to cause a doubt as to whether the collection in the National Gallery of London or that in the Louvre is being broken up.

Every picture of average merit is in some sense similar to a greater picture, and probably this is the reason those with a little knowledge have so little hesitation in ascribing work. Do not let the auctioneer know what you are anxious to possess at a sale as it is his duty to get the most he can for

the seller, and also the more he gets for an article the more commission he makes. Sometimes an auctioneer can coax a good price from the company by reason of his astuteness and plausible manner, and if he observes two parties he knows to be collectors bidding against each other he is pretty sure to do all he can to keep them at it. As an instance, at a recent sale of curios there was exposed a fine old jug of Oriental china which fetched a good price ; the following week there was a sale of modern effects in the same room, and in due time a modern imitation of this jug, of cheap workmanship, was put up and the bidding ceased at a few shillings. " Why ! ladies and gentlemen," said the auctioneer, " I last week got as many pounds *for a secondhand one.*"

It was the same seller who, after obtaining a good price for a Nankin dish in perfect condition, later in the sale, had one somewhat similar, but very badly broken, and patched together with innumerable rivets. He did not refer to the cracks, but alluded to the dish as " beautifully riveted." " Each of these rivets would cost threepence, and there are dozens of them, ladies and gentlemen."

On both of these occasions he got a good price, and the same sort of thing applies to the selling of

pictures, the price largely depending on the auctioneer and the mood of the buyers. It is often the case that a valuable picture with an authentic history is knocked down for a trifling sum for seemingly no reason other than that the audience were not in a buying mood. Frequenters of sale-rooms generally take a careful note of the price of each lot, and presumably keep the marked catalogue for future reference; but the auction price of a picture is no criterion of value, as there must of necessity be a greater or less difference in quality, and in works which bring a comparatively high price there is always the possibility that its true value has not been reached owing to a "ring" having been formed to acquire it. This is what is more commonly known as a "knock out," and is the formation of a small body of likely buyers, who agree not to oppose each other, and accordingly succeed, unless there is outside opposition in acquiring the lot at their own price. They then repair to an adjoining hotel and hold an auction of their own, where each bidder as he stops, or is "knocked out" of the bidding, receives a percentage. Though this sort of thing is not honest, it is difficult to prevent, and some dealers make a living by constantly joining "rings" and receiving

a percentage, though they have neither the means nor the intention to become the ultimate buyers. Possessors of valuable works of art should remember there is always a risk of this sort of thing, and should consider whether they would not be better satisfied with a private sale to a firm of repute, as it is equally dishonest and probably illegal to "bid up" one's own property. On the other hand an auction sale is the best place to get the highest value for anything, if the sale is a good one and there is no "knock out."

Another thing to guard against is the temptation to buy articles at a small profit on what they fetched at auction, as sometimes a lot is put into a sale and run up altogether beyond its value by the owner's friends with this very object in view.

The Preservation of Pictures.

Pictures should occasionally be examined to see if they are from any cause suffering damage. Works of value should not be placed where at some time during the day strong sunshine falls on them, as the sun will cause those colours which are fugitive, particularly the carnations, to fade. If the walls of a room through a burst pipe or such cause, become damp, the pictures should be immediately taken down, as in the case of relined works the old and new canvases will begin to separate and bulge out in places.

Many people when they commence collecting become consumed with a desire to clean and put in order their pictures themselves. It should be borne in mind that if a canvas is worth restoring it is worth paying some one to do it properly. The majority of old pictures are improved by re-lining, that is attaching a new canvas to the back of the old one, as, even if there are no holes and it is not cracking, it "firms up" the paint

and improves the general look of the picture. It may be necessary also to have any dirty varnish removed, but on no account allow varnish to be taken off if it is clear and transparent with a mellow look. Then, again, it may be necessary to have some slight retouching done, and finally the picture revarnished.

Now each and all of these things is an art requiring both great patience and long practice. The man so employed must be carefully trained, and have the proper materials for the purpose with space to use them in. For instance a reliner must have a large table with a slate or iron top, and an assortment of large and powerful stretching frames, with flat-irons, weighing ten or twenty pounds, and, moreover, a fireplace close at hand. In fact he requires a room fitted up for his work. It takes an intelligent man some five or six years to become proficient in the mechanical work alone, even with everything to help him.

A good cleaner and retoucher is, or ought to be, a man who could paint a tolerable picture himself, he must be a born colourist and have an extensive knowledge of various kinds of paint, both as to texture and consistency. A really able restorer is so rare that his services are largely sought and he can command a large price for his labour and

gets more work than he can easily overcome. There is a popular belief that there is some secret solution for removing varnish and cleaning pictures, but that is not the case ; the secret is not what it is done with, but how it is done. It is surely absurd, looking at these facts, that persons with little or no experience or talent will jauntily undertake to clean valuable works. It is even dangerous to do one's own varnishing as, simple though it seems, great care is necessary, and unless properly done the varnish will go on blooming indefinitely. If poor material is used, or if it is thickly applied, it will expand and contract with the changing temperature of the room it is placed in. A newly varnished canvas should not be hung where warm sunlight or any other heat may affect it, as it is almost certain the varnish will crack and take the paint with it. Pictures are often spoiled by being loaded up with too many coats of varnish, giving the surface a smooth appearance like an oleograph, and reflecting all light objects near at hand like a looking-glass. Some reliners are able to take the paint off an old twisted and warped panel and lay it flat on a new canvas without harming the picture. This is not so difficult as it at first appears ; the paint is not removed from the panel, but the panel from the paint.

Damage is sometimes caused by people endeavouring to brighten up their pictures by rubbing them with oil or megilp or some other vehicle used for painting. As a rule the result is a sticky mess unevenly applied, with the dust of the room adhering to it. If there is anything wrong with a picture get a practical man to put it right, and if there is nothing wrong leave it alone.

Do not attempt to wash your pictures with water, or soap and water, as it will probably harm the paint and may even make it blister away from the canvas. If any dusting is required, it should be done with a silk duster.

If the canvas bulges or sags, have the stretcher keyed up tight at once as, when the canvas becomes untaut, it is apt to be the cause of the paint cracking or blistering off. Even the regilding of the frames is an important matter, as the colour of the gold may not agree with the picture and may harm its appearance. Compare the colour of the fine old water gilding with the copper and brass-coloured frames seen generally now-a-days.

A hole or tear in a canvas, if not immediately repaired, is apt to be caught by every passing object, and the damage to be increased, and, even if covered with a glass as a protection, the weight of

the canvas being unevenly drawn by the sides of the stretcher is sufficient to make a tear larger, whereas, if attended to in time, the picture could be easily put right.

Pictures of which the owners had no appreciation, possibly because they had been torn or the varnish had become black with age and dust, have been found in a damp loft or cellar deposited there as valueless; the damp having caused the canvas to become rotten and the paint brittle, the restorer's work and difficulties have increased, as the paint must be softened and the picture made pliable before it can be relined. Many a picture which has been regarded as absolutely in a state of decay and ruination has been preserved by cleaning, relining, and a very small amount of retouching.

Pictures deteriorate very much if they have been hidden away in a dark place, a fact well known and recognised by painters long ago. A letter exists from Titian to one of his patrons in which he says that the picture he is sending will have suffered some temporary harm through being packed up for its journey, and he requests him to have it exposed to the light immediately on its arrival.

The following is the letter referred to :—

TITIAN TO THE DUKE OF URBINO.*

“ . . . I have heard that the painting was a long time on the road, and I think it would be proper to have it placed for half an hour in the sun to counteract any injury which it may have received. And so, kissing your Excellency's hand, I remain, &c.,

TITIANO VECELLO.

“ From VENICE, 3rd May, 1567.”

We had personal knowledge of a case in point several years ago. A large work by Ribera occupied so much room that the only place where it could be deposited was in the billiard room, where it was propped up on one of the long seats. It was so heavy that it could not be readily moved and remained for some months in that position, where for a couple of hours each day the midday summer sun beat directly on it. The picture had previously, owing to its size, been stored in a cellar for twenty years, and was of a dark brown colour. Without any cleaning it gradually assumed a golden glow, and the details, which had been quite obscured,

* The original is in “*Lettere d'Illustri Italiani non mai Stampate*,” pub. da Z. Bicchierai per le Nozze Galestti-Cardenas di Vallengio, 8vo, Fir. Le Monnier, 1864, p. 11.

Titian (Crowe and Cavalcaselle), Vol. II., p. 372.

came out in their true values, and the various colours, particularly the carnations and blues, became glowing and fresh.

If the surface of a picture is much cracked or torn, or if the paint is blistering, it is advisable to reline the canvas before any cleaning is commenced, otherwise all those portions which stand out higher than the rest will be either overcleaned or may have the paint completely taken off them. The usual method of relining is, having carefully cut the canvas from the old stretcher, to lay it on a table paint upwards, the table being of the nature of a printer's "stone," with a perfectly flat surface of iron or stone, the latter being preferable, as there is no trouble caused by corrosion, then a sheet of soft white cartridge paper is affixed by thin flour paste to the front of the picture, being carefully pressed down with the flat of the hand. An important thing at this stage, which is frequently overlooked, is to feel for any brushwork which stands high, and to take measures to protect it during the process of ironing, as the majority of reliners iron away the good qualities so highly prized by a painter, such as the high lights on the brow, cheeks and nose of a portrait. This can be done by padding up the parts with small pieces of

the paper and applying one or more extra sheets over the whole canvas, thus preventing the iron from knocking the high lights off the picture, and allowing the ironing to be done equally without unduly pressing down the texture. The picture should be left overnight to make certain the paste is dry. Having thus prepared the picture, a canvas, slightly damp, is tacked on to a strongly built stretching-frame, some six inches larger all round than the picture being relined, so that the iron may easily be worked right up to the edge of the canvas. The picture, meanwhile, having been turned face downwards on the table, a paste is rubbed evenly into the back of it. This paste can be made of a mixture of thin glue and flour, or from cheese pounded in a mortar and diluted with lime water, the resultant paste being impervious to damp; but whether glue, fish glue, or this paste is used, care must be taken that it is evenly applied and that no lumps are left. The picture is then laid on the new canvas and ironed down with a moderately hot iron, care being taken not to allow the iron to remain steady or to be too hot. The picture should be left to dry and get set for at least a day before being fixed to its stretcher, which should be cross-barred if the picture is anything but a very small one. In

removing the paper from the front of the canvas a damp sponge should be used with caution, as too much water will cause the paint to rise or the canvases to separate. Though the process may seem an easy one, great skill and experience are required to obtain a good result without doing any damage. The stretcher should now have a piece of paper about two and a half inches wide pasted on the four sides to exclude air and thus assist the old and new canvases to adhere ; about an eighth of an inch only of this paper should obtrude on the front of the picture all round, and it should be painted the colour of the portions it adjoins.

Any holes or tears in the canvas should be filled with a paste made of whiting and size, which may be tinted with retouching colours to approximately match the surrounding parts, care being taken to make the damaged parts absolutely level ; this done, the picture is ready for cleaning.

There are several solvents of varnish which can be used by skilled restorers with comparatively little risk for the purpose of cleaning oil paintings, but the safest way is to start "fretting" with the finger tips—that is to rub a small portion in a circular direction until the varnish starts to come away as a powder. Every picture requires different treat-

ment from another, and it is comparatively few that clean so easily, but when they do the varnish comes away more readily if occasionally it is damped with a wet sponge and dried with a cloth. Experience is necessary or the paint may be "fretted" away very readily with the varnish. If the varnish does not yield in this way the safest solvent is spirits of wine diluted with turpentine, which at first should be only one-third of the former to two-thirds of the latter. This strength should not be increased unless necessary. These liquids do not readily stay amalgamated in the dish in which they are placed, so they should be constantly mixed together during the time they are being used, or the cotton wool may absorb nothing but the spirits of wine and do damage to the paint before being noticed. A piece of flannel soaked in turpentine and oil should be kept ready at hand for use in such a contingency. Most pictures can be successfully cleaned with this solvent, but if the varnish will not dissolve, a dangerous solvent, such as carbonate of ammonia diluted with turpentine, may be used. Only a small portion, if possible commencing with an unimportant part of the canvas, should be undertaken at a time, and the part should be continually moistened with turpentine, oil, or water to make certain no damage is being done.

Do not begin at the foot of the picture, as you may start cleaning operations by removing a signature that may be there concealed beneath the dirt and varnish. A circular motion, the same as in "fretting," should be maintained with the cotton wool (which should be that known as unbleached).

Though a small portion is cleaned at a time, it should not be cleaned right down to the paint, but left with a coating of varnish on it, and the clean portion gradually enlarged until the whole picture is equally cleaned. By this means a coating of varnish is left on the picture giving that mellow look that only time can give and that no method of colouring the varnish can compare with. A picture is better under-cleaned than over-cleaned, and this method has the additional advantage of preserving intact the original glazings of transparent colours.

Retouching, as we have said before, is work for an experienced man with talent, as the difficulty of matching the colours of the damaged parts with the undamaged portions, without putting any touching on the latter, is very great. Special colours in powder form should be used; this is essential, as otherwise the oils in ordinary paints would discolour and leave the retouched portions darker than the rest of the picture. It is a good method to procure

a number of empty tubes from a colourman, and having mixed the well-grounded powdered paints with a good varnish, such as Professor Vibert's, to put them in the tubes and close them ready for use. If properly prepared in this way they should remain in good order for about twelve months. The damaged places should be delicately touched with a fine brush, and on no account should an attempt be made to get texture, unless the restoration is of a portion of the picture, of considerable size, that is altogether amissing; in such a case every means should be employed to match the adjoining brush-work. In repairing a picture of special translucency, such as a Dutch or Flemish panel, it is generally advisable to use a little shellac varnish, as the transparency is more easily imitated. The picture should not be too heavily varnished, and if more than one coat is necessary, care should be taken to apply it thin. The temperature of the room, the picture and the varnish should be the same, and a good drying day should be chosen. If the canvas is at all damp owing to relining or cleaning it should not be varnished until it is perfectly dry, as it will "bloom"—that is a sort of smoky mist will lodge on the surface, which even if removed with a silk cloth will probably return.

The final coating, when the retouching and retouching varnishes are perfectly dry, should be done with a quick-drying copal varnish, diluted with turpentine, but owing to the difficulty in removing it, this should be sparingly used, and then only as a preservative of the completed restoration. The greatest care should be taken to ascertain that one coat of varnish is perfectly dry before applying another, as it is impossible to obtain an even surface if varnish is applied while the picture is still tacky. This applies also to retouching, as, if the portion being repaired cannot be matched by one painting, the first should be quite dry before it is touched again. However, this should only occur in rare instances, as the secret of good retouching is to match the colours as perfectly as possible on the palette before they are transferred to the canvas, and it will generally be found advisable, if paint is put on a picture of an unsatisfactory colour, to take it off immediately with a rag dipped in turpentine, and to mix the colours afresh. As we have said before it is the difficulty of matching colours exactly which leads the inexperienced retoucher to over-paint his work, and to dabble not only on the parts where retouching is necessary, but extensively on all the surroundings thereof. Pictures can frequently

be seen that appear not worth having on account of the obvious repainting they have undergone, and although it is not safe to buy them, occasionally when all this labour and messing is removed, the picture is found to be in quite a good condition, requiring very little work to put it in good order.

During the whole process of repairing the greatest care should be exercised to keep everything clean. All the dishes and tins should be cleaned every day after use, and the picture covered with a cloth whenever it is not being worked on, until it is dry; otherwise, when in a strong light, dust will be revealed sticking all over it. For the same reason the work should not be done in a beam of sunlight, as, although it is possible to see better, the dust is always moving about where a sunbeam enters a room.

It may sometimes be found advisable to soften a canvas to admit of it being properly restretched, and, if the picture also requires relining, it can be made pliable before that process by working into the back with a hog's hair brush a mixture of Venetian turpentine and a little spirit varnish; this process also assists to bring up the brilliancy of the colours.

We recently saw a book on the restoration of

oil paintings which advised the use of a large number of instruments for the purposes of cleaning pictures, such as files, scrapers, pumice stone and bits of glass, all evidently for purposes of scraping. The use of any of these implements is extremely risky, and we never yet have seen a canvas which we would care to have cleaned in any other way than we have endeavoured to demonstrate. Of course it is sometimes expedient to use a stiff brush or the point of a blunt penknife to get varnish out of interstices, but the principal things necessary are experience and brains, and if the old varnish and dirt on a painting will not yield to the foregoing methods, it is pretty certain to be one of that kind which it is better to leave as it is.

A painting can be removed from a cracked and crumbling panel and transferred to a new panel or canvas, though it is a matter of much more difficulty than ordinary relining, and requires the exercise of great patience. The painting is first prepared as for lining by pasting firmly and evenly one or more sheets of paper on it, and the panel is then turned face downwards and affixed to a level table. The wood is then gradually planed and pared down until what remains can be picked off the paint, when the paint can be recanvased in the same

way as ordinary relining is done. But this can only be done when the paint is of such a thickness as will admit of its separation from the wood. Mural paintings have been transferred to canvas in this way when they otherwise would have perished. This is never done, however, unless absolutely necessary, as greater or less damage is almost certain to be done.

It should always be borne in mind that the less retouching and cleaning a picture gets the better, and practically every collector would rather see an honest crack or small blemish of any kind than a lot of retouching, however well the latter may have been done. Every competent restorer realises this, and the amount of his ability can generally be gauged, when his advice is asked, by what he says in this respect, and, as a rule, he will refuse to undertake work on a picture which he knows is in too bad a condition for him to make a satisfactory restoration without repainting it.

Water-Colour.

For generations the art of water-colour painting was wholly or practically neglected to burst forth rejuvenated by the early British school of water-colour painters. There are many Dutch pictures in water-colours painted in the seventeenth century extant, and it was a polite art in England in the time of George III., but previous to the time of Paul Sandby there was a hardness about the work done in this medium, and although it is probable that some of his immediate predecessors and his contemporaries painted with the same amount of skill, credit is generally given to Paul Sandby of being the first leader of the art as we now admire it. It seems extraordinary to us now-a-days that men of such outstanding genius as Cotman, Cox and De Wint were so little appreciated in their time that they were unable to earn a living, and that almost all the great water-colour painters England then produced had to turn to teaching or to oils to eke out an existence. All the more credit is due these men

that they did not pander to popular taste, but strove on, painting what they loved and knew was true art, even in the most adverse circumstances.

John Sell Cotman, David Cox, Peter de Wint, the immortal Turner, and, more lately, the only Scottish representative of note, Sam Bough, and some few others reached as high a scale in their art as any of their countrymen have done with oil painting. Most of the great water-colour men were also great as painters in oils, and it is difficult to realize that the same man who painted those daintily touched and charmingly coloured pictures in the National Gallery of London was also responsible for the large bold canvases in another room.

A really good water-colour by any of these men, though it may be only some eight by ten inches in size, has all the force and carrying power of a canvas which can be measured by feet. The knowledge of this branch of art is a special study, but when acquired the pleasure derived is certainly no less than that derived from even the greatest Old Masters. The breeze in an example by Cox, the colour and simple broad treatment of Cotman, the glorious atmospheric effects of Turner and the clever lighting of a Bough, are all things worth years of study to acquire the capability of admiring.

There are all sorts of copies sold and frauds perpetrated in this as in the kindred art, and it is a good rule to follow—not to buy any water-colour unless perfectly convinced that it is superlatively good, and if it is not possible to get good advice it is advisable to purchase only from a dealer with an established reputation.

Many clever copies and “faked” signatures are in the market, and as a good water-colour by a man whose work is sought after fetches a long price, too much care cannot be taken. In many instances these copies are not made originally for purposes of fraud, but are the work of able painters who consciously or unconsciously are adopting the style of some celebrated predecessor, and usually it is after leaving the painter's hands in the ordinary way that some unscrupulous person alters the signature and sometimes portions of the work, to enable it to pass for something with a greater market value. It is amusing to go through some well-known private collections and hear the owner praising works of this nature and pointing out imaginary excellences which are not apparent to any one but himself. Sometimes he is aware he has been deceived, but does not like to acknowledge it, even to himself.

It is well to become thoroughly acquainted with the kind of paper each artist was generally in the habit of painting on, and it should be a comparatively easy matter to satisfy oneself as to whether the paper is of an age similar to the time of the artist whose work the picture purports to be, as it should always be borne in mind that it is advisable in judging pictures to bring to bear one's commonsense on self-evident facts before going to the trouble of employing art knowledge in general, or more particularly any knowledge a person may have of a specific individual's methods of craftsmanship, and it will be found nine times out of ten that the employment of this same faculty of commonsense will eliminate any necessity for the use of the other more variable and usually less reliable qualities.

To form a good collection of water-colours requires more particular study than it does to collect oils, although the diversities of style are more limited in accordance with the smaller number of first-class artists in the former medium; but the paintings being on a smaller scale, and the pigments being applied more thinly, less scope is left to the amateur for exercising his powers of identification of methods and mannerisms. Practically all the

best water-colour artists applied their colours in pure direct washes one laid on another, and the present day vague and misty effects, affected by many painters, and procured by continually damping and scrubbing, were not employed by those men whose work is eagerly sought for by collectors. It should be remembered that true water-colour painting differs essentially from oil painting. In the latter a painter, of necessity, works from darks to lights, whereas in the former he works from lights to darks, preserving his paper as his strongest light and even using a scraper to make them effective, and when a water-colour drawing is done on white paper the high lights should not be painted in body colour. Although this method is sometimes employed it is not considered legitimate by the best water-colour artists, and never gives the same brilliancy and lightness to the work, and should only be employed when the paper is tinted. This can be taken as a general rule, though in all matters pertaining to art a painter of pre-eminent genius can set any rule aside and emerge triumphantly Constable, Gainsborough and many others did some very beautiful water-colour work, and there were a number of eminent caricaturists who coloured their drawings; but the following short list embraces

probably the names of those who devoted all or a large part of their lives to this medium, and contains the names of most of those whose originality was responsible for the advancement of the art from tinted hard outlines, through the various stages of development, to the open air freely painted drawings of Cotman, Cox and De Wint, which for strength and atmospheric effects will easily hold their own with any similar subjects painted with oil paints.

Paul Sandby, who was born in 1725, was probably the first water-colourist to work direct from nature in this medium with the view of getting his effects, unassisted by any method of outline drawing. Though a considerable amount of delicate and beautiful work had been done in this country and on the continent, it had generally been of the nature of studies for oil paintings, or else partook too much of the character of tinted outlined work. He recognised that water-colours could be applied to paper with as good atmospheric effects and absence of conventional outline [as could be accomplished by the sister method of oil painting. His landscapes, while being a distinct epoch-making advance on the work of his period, are some-

what indefinite in colour, and a suggestion of the outlining methods of his contemporaries can be traced in his treatment of foliage. He died in 1809.

John Robert Cozens was born in 1752, and represents by his work a period when the art was neutral in colour, broader in the treatment and washes, and fuller in strength than the Sandby period, but not yet reaching anything like the full colouring of a drawing by Cox. His method was to commence by getting the general tone of the composition in monotone, over which he laid in the brighter colours. His drawings are correct in light and shade but colourless in tone, and though the artistic sympathy and blending of tints is admirable, there is a feeling left that the drawing has not been keyed up to the colour pitch of nature. A considerable amount of his best work was of Italian and Swiss scenery, more particularly the former. A successfully treated sunlight effect, either on distant hills or on the foreground, is frequently seen in his work.

Thomas Girtin was born in 1775. He was engaged by a publisher, in his youth, to make drawings of English landscapes for reproduction, many of which were of cathedrals. These are

boldly composed, and show a distinct advance in colour, though they are sometimes too brown. He died young, but showed such talent that it is believed he would have rivalled Turner had he lived; his work showed such marked individuality. His drawings are always bold and broad, showing fine draughtsmanship. Ely Cathedral, Peterborough and Lichfield Cathedrals, views around York, Kirkstall and Jedburgh Abbeys are typical examples of the subjects he derived inspiration from. The broad manner in which he treated the light and shade on big expanses of open country is a marked feature in his work.

J. M. W. Turner, the son of a barber, was born in London in 1775. He was made an Associate of the Academy when only twenty-four, and became an Academician when he was twenty-seven. He, like Girtin, did a considerable amount of work at first for publishers, which possibly restricted his handling, but his later work shows such a mastery of colour treatment and a confidence in his control of the materials he was using that he stands as a water-colour painter on much the same plane as Rembrandt does as an etcher. In fact the handling of his brushes in his later manner corresponds very nearly to the methods employed by an etcher. He

used washes or stipples, whichever he felt would achieve the best result, and brought the art to such a height in respect to artistic technique that it is difficult to realise how it could be carried to much greater perfection. His best work is keyed up to an extraordinary brightness, and in the depiction of atmospheric effect he is unequalled; but, broadly speaking, the treatment of distance and foreground never reaches the accuracy of colour and truthfulness of tone which give distinction to the works of Cox and De Wint. In short, the genius of Turner rests largely on the handling of his materials and his treatment of aerial effect.

John Varley, born in 1778, was a good colourist, and, though not reaching to the height of genius, had a thorough knowledge of his craft. Though a trifle conventional in his composition and treatment of his subject, he was always pleasing in result.

John Sell Cotman was born at Norwich in 1782. He was on friendly terms with a great number of artists, from whom he learned a good deal, but possibly most of all from Girtin and Turner. He paid three visits to Normandy, illustrating a work on architectural antiquities there. His best work has a golden tinge of sunlight pervading the drawing, and is remarkable for boldness in design and

clear flat washes. It is not generally known that he was originally a portrait painter before he devoted himself to illustrative work. He died in 1842.

David Cox was born in 1783 at a time when a number of capable young artists were determinedly throwing aside for ever those conventionalities which hemmed in their art to the detriment of progress. He had the advantage of being a contemporary of De Wint, Copley Fielding, Cotman and others, and no doubt the productions of each helped to spur forward the others. No matter what comparisons may be made, it is highly probable that David Cox will, of all his contemporaries be the one whose work fellow artists will most admire, not only for the clear, crisp washes but for the suggestion of movement and dexterous handling. Like the Scotsman, Sam Bough, he was for a time a scene painter, which occupation assisted him in his drawings by training him to get a powerful effect of light and shade without forcing his tones. The sense of atmosphere and suggestion of wind in his drawings are so ably conveyed that his work, if only for these qualities, would stand unique. He became acquainted with John Varley, from whom he derived much encouragement and help,

but his own genius quickly asserted itself. He learned to paint in oils from W. J. Muller, and succeeded so well that examples in this medium are highly prized. Like all great water-colourists, he had several distinct periods of progression, as he became more confident in the use of his materials and ambitious in the treatment of his subjects.

Peter De Wint, the son of a doctor of Dutch descent, was born in Staffordshire in 1784. He was apprenticed to John Raphael Smith for some years, when he came in contact with several painters who did work for that engraver. He started life as an oil painter, and it is known that Smith allowed him to be free from the last four years of his indenture in return for eighteen pictures in this medium. He afterwards turned to water-colour painting, for which there was a more ready sale, though he never forsook oil painting. He was a man of dogged determination, and his drawings reflect his own characteristics in their bold composition and broad, full washes. Unlike Turner, he rarely made much use of sky effects, which he frequently left scantily painted, the creamy paper having sometimes only a few washes on it. The massing of his foliage tends rather to an excellence of general effect than to truth of detail. There is

a freshness and beauty about his work, which no matter what change may take place in art fashion, will always captivate the lover of true water-colour painting by its directness and absence of any laboured quality.

A. V. Copley Fielding was born in 1787. Much of his best work was done in Sussex, where the graceful lines and delicate colouring of the Downs suited admirably his style of painting. He also painted mountain scenery in Scotland and Wales, and some coast scenes. He was more a painter of charming scenery than a forceful or great painter, and had not those qualities of insight which Cox and De Wint possessed. But he was aware of the limitations of his palette and confined his labours to those subjects which he could do well.

William John Muller, whose father was a German, was born at Bristol in 1812, and was a pupil of J. B. Pyne. He painted both in oils and water-colours with great strength, doing most of his work direct from nature. He was a strong colourist and worked with great rapidity. He died young, but did much good work, which is held in the highest appreciation. While quite a young man he taught David Cox to paint in oils, when the latter was nearing sixty years of age.

Sam Bough was born at Carlisle in 1822, but is generally looked on as a Scotsman, as most of his best work was done after he settled in Edinburgh. He was originally a scene painter, working in Manchester and Glasgow, and was largely self-taught. He became a Royal Scottish Academician in 1875. Though he painted a great deal in oils, his best work is generally considered to be that done in water-colours. The atmospheric effects, the command of lighting, and the facility of his handling place him, when at his best, easily on a level with the greatest water-colourists, though for some unaccountable reason, though his works are most highly prized and eagerly purchased, he is never bracketed as he deserves to be with such men as Cotman, Cox, and De Wint.

There are a large number of other men about the comparative excellences of whose work opinions may differ, but who occasionally reached in their efforts a high pinnacle of success, and although no painter can constantly maintain his highest level, it is possible to form a comparison by the quality and amount of the achievements during a painter's best period, as instanced by the output of David Cox from say 1845 to 1858. There are also a few water-colourists who still remain somewhat

undiscovered. Possibly they painted too few pictures, or their works have either been lost for the most part, or been ascribed to some better known artist. However this may be, one frequently comes across a drawing by a man whose name is hardly known, which quite well holds its own with a good example of Cox or De Wint. It is such works as these which, when unsigned, are frequently ascribed to the painter whose technique they most nearly resemble, and it is only the expert who can decide the authorship. It will be apparent, also, how easy it is for any unscrupulous person to add a signature to a work of this kind, which, while being of undoubted merit, would be of little commercial value if by an unknown painter. Collectors should remember that such a drawing may have had the signature washed out and another one substituted.

The number of present day painters in water colour, both here and on the Continent, who turn out work of a high standard is ever increasing, and though this book has treated of old pictures only, it by no means decries modern work of any kind. We have said elsewhere that the art of landscape painting is now at a much higher level than ever before, both as to lighting and atmospheric effect.

It is possible for a collector with judgment to acquire the best work of his contemporaries, thus encouraging the art of his own generation, and indeed he has the opportunity of being the discoverer of talent and even genius, long before the popular eye has been taught to appreciate it. It may be truthfully said that it is a duty of the collector with means to buy the work he sees being produced around him, provided he is satisfied that the quality is good. Even as a matter of speculation, it has proved to be the case that many hundreds per cent. of profit have been made by connoisseurs of taste who have had enough confidence to invest in modern pictures before the artist who painted them had quite reached the highest pinnacle of general appreciation.

